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SKETCHES

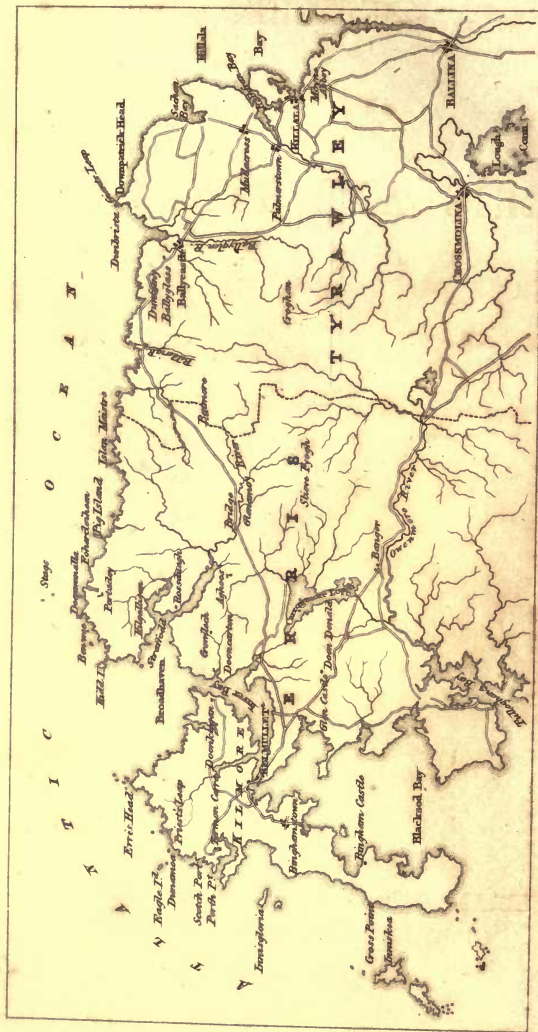
IN

ERRIS AND TYRAWLY.









*Am. Curry Junr*

SKETCHES

IN

ERRIS AND TYRAWLY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Sketches in Ireland," "A Tour in Connaught," &c.

WITH A MAP

AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS.

DUBLIN

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE Volume I now offer to the public is, in a measure, a continuation of my "Tour in Connaught," and a fulfilment of an engagement to my publishers to supply them with a description of Erris. And here I am free to acknowledge, that, being obliged to make my tour at a certain period of the year, I for two successive seasons found the weather so unfavourable as to preclude me from going as far as I proposed, or observing what, under other circumstances, might have been within my scope. This statement, if it be an apology for not writing a larger work, may be acceptable enough to those who *must* read; and it at any rate affords me an opportunity of offering a friendly hint to those who *would* travel—namely, avoid our Far West in the autumn, for then Mackintosh himself cannot provide you with "appliances and means" to keep you dry and comfortable. No; the month of June is the tourist's time for Connaught, for then is his best and, indeed I may say,

only chance of clear skies, dry ground, and smooth seas. I have, in the course of twenty-five years, visited the north-west of Connaught six times: on five of these occasions circumstances forced me to fix on the months of August and September, and I then invariably found the weather wet and stormy; on the sixth, which was the time I visited Achill Island, it was the latter end of the month of May, and the season was as auspicious as I could possibly desire.

For my personal inabilities I have endeavoured to make up by seeking for information from friends upon whom I could rely, and I have been favoured with what I deem worthy of acceptance with the public, and more than sufficient to supply my deficiencies. The information I sought I most readily received from Archdeacon Verschoyle, who has written a valuable paper (published in the Transactions of the Geological Society) on the geology of the north coast of Mayo and Sligo. Of this work it may be said, that in the soundness of its views, the clearness of its statements, and the accuracy of its illustrations, it is a model for all future local geological notices of our island; from him I not only received much information, but also some of the drawings, with wood-cuts of which my work is illustrated.

From Lieutenant Henri, commander of the coast-guard station at Doonkeegan (a naval officer who has resided in Erris for nineteen years, and who, to an accurate knowledge of his profession, has acquirements, scientific and general, which I have seldom seen combined in any officer in the service, either military or naval) I have received also large assistance, and more drawings than my publishers thought it necessary to engrave. I also am equally indebted to Mr. George Crampton, the agent of Mr. Carter, one of the great landed proprietors of Erris. I have no reason to regret that my young friend has given up his pursuit of a fellowship in Trinity College, to settle himself in the wilds of Erris; his taste for antiquarian research, his love for natural history, his inquiries into the traditions of the people, have made him an able auxiliary, and his generosity has been equal to his capability.

I have no desire to have it supposed that Erris has not been hitherto described. Mr. Maxwell, the well-known author of many agreeable and useful works, has, in his "Wild Sports of the West," given sundry pleasant traits and stories of that southern portion of it called Ballycroy, and has, in his lively manner, called attention to its wild mountain scenery, and to

the red deer and other scarce game that still find retreats in its glens.

Mr. Knight has also, in a work which only requires to be better known to be more appreciated, given an account of Erris, and has brought the knowledge which he as a civil engineer acquired, during a residence of some years, to bear, in showing its unimproved capabilities, and supplying many valuable statistical statements. Satisfied that Mr. Knight has executed what he undertook in a business-like manner, I have made no attempt to afford what he has so ably and cheaply supplied.

Travelling for no object but to enjoy a little relaxation from town occupations, and writing for none but to occupy my evenings, I place my new volume before the public, with the honest wish that my readers may experience some small portion of the pleasure I enjoyed in seeing, and of the pastime in describing the things contained in what follows.

C. O.

Dublin, 18th May, 1841.



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# SKETCHES

IN

## ERRIS AND TYRAWLY.

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### CHAPTER I.

Departure for Erris—State of Weather—Tyrawly—Irish Climate—Crosmolina—No place for a Breakfast—Nephtin Mountain—Great Bog—Mountain Ranges—Entrance into Erris—Its Principal River—A Piscatory Paradise—The Mountain Pass—The swept-away Village—The Last of his Race—Bangor—A Church set on a Hill—The Old Road—The Old Castle—The Old Tradition—The Old Irish similar to the Red Men of America in their War Trophies—The Ball of Brains—The Irish Ulysses—Christianity by anticipation—Royal Devotion, .

I LEFT Ballina early, having an untried road before me; and the recollection of haps, hazards, and stoppages in previous journeys, undertaken over similar districts, determined me to take time by the forelock, and be off betimes. The country was covered, as is usual in broken weather in the month of September, with a fog that shut out distant objects. Even Nephtin, the great mountain of central Mayo, though within a few miles, was invisible. This district, which is called Tyrawly, (one of the finest in the western province, and which has, or rather *had*, more resident gentry than any of the same extent in Connaught) was now before me, and I was to pass through a part I had never

visited before, yet it was not observable. I could just see that it was hilly, grassy, and fertile ; not unlike some parts of Fermanagh or Monaghan. On either side of the road were well-planted demesnes ; and as the morning partially cleared up, I could catch glimpses of Lough Con, with many wooded promontories stretching out into it, and islands dimly peeping out from the wreath of mist that mantled them in indistinctness.

From what I could see, I felt convinced that in favourable weather I would have found myself passing through an interesting country. But such forfeits must the tourist often pay in Ireland, and he should be prepared for such uncertainties. To be sure, you frequently enjoy an atmosphere delightfully transparent, under which woods and waters smile in all the glories of light and shade ; mountains, so singularly near that you may admire the blue and purple tints of the heath-flowers and campanulas on their sides ; cloud scenery amusing you with its variety, and astonishing you with its gorgeousness. But then, the following day may come, and often the clearness of the one is but a portent of the muddiness of the other ; and as was now the case with me, the tourist may be surrounded with misty curtains, hanging over the waters, shrouding the mountains and hiding every thing but the near and but too frequent deformities of the landscape.

I approached Crosmolina about seven o'clock, and could see before me, on the right, a snug house standing in a green and well-planted lawn, through which flowed deviously, in many a graceful bend, a



fine river. This, I felt assured, was the glebe house, and I had a letter of introduction to the minister, of whose hospitalities I was well assured; but I looked at the windows and saw the shutters closed—no doors open—no busy stir about—no smoke wreathing from the chimneys. “The good man,” thinks I, “don’t like cold foggy mornings, he is not yet risen, and, if I drive up I shall rouse him from his nest, and I will make a *pother*, and I shall not get my breakfast for an hour at least, and then I must stay for another hour to show I don’t play the beggar’s part, and quit the door when hunger is satisfied. Besides, Erris and its untried ways are before me, and I must not squander two hours, so I’ll run my chance for a breakfast at the inn of Crosmolina—there must surely be one—the town looms well through the mist, it must be respectable; I see a church and steeple, a fine old ruined castle hanging over the river, many slated houses—so here’s for a good breakfast.”

Well, on I drove, my jaunting car driver asserting that there was a *dacent* place where the *quality do be stopping*. So on we rumbled through the dirty street, whose lazy inhabitants had not yet unclosed their shop windows, except here and there a whiskey house open; and you could see the dirty, lean, and squalid tradesman slinking out after having taken his MORN-ING.

We stopt at one of the dingiest and most disgusting tenements of the whole town; there was a dark smoke-stained drop coming from the reeking thatch, and a foul puddle festering before the door, out of which came wreathing the dense smoke of a new lit

turf fire ; and at intervals, as the wind swept the encumbering smoke away, I could see a drab of a woman standing at the half door, who seemed disposed to ask what brought me there.

“So this is the inn?” said I to my driver.

“Yes, *plaze* yer honour, there’s none other in the town.”

“Well, good woman,” says I, addressing the MARITORNES at the door, who was certainly the very *ideal* of unseemliness—her smoke-discoloured skin, apparently unacquainted with soap and water—her dark eyes gleaming from under black lank hair, that had escaped from out a rent in her blowsy cap, and flowed in filthy profusion down her neck.—“Can I get breakfast here?”

“Yes, to be sure. What would ail yez from getting it? or what breakfast do yez want? Will white bread, butter, *tay*, eggs, and rashers of *bacon* do yez?”

“Yes, ma’am,” said I, meekly, seeing she was rather brisk; “but where am I to sit? not in this shop, sure?” looking round ruefully where filthy beer pots, tumblers grimed with last night’s punch, or the froth of porter, all in confusion covered a counter; and where tobacco pipes, bits of blue soap, mouldy bricks of bread, and damp squares of salt, garnished the shop window.

“Oh, no!” says MARITORNES; “it’s up stairs yez go: come this way.”

So on she went and mounted before me a thing, half stairs, half ladder, that creaked under her broad foot as she ascended, and, as I proceeded with more caution to drag my loftier person up the same ascent,

I heard the woman scolding away at some one in the room she had entered in front of the landing place.

With disgust mingled with curiosity I hesitatingly entered the open apartment intended for my room of refreshment, and what did I behold! Why, the woman forcibly dragging bed and bed clothes from a bedstead, cursing and reproving all the while; and a pair of legs protruded beyond the bed post, being launched with a body attached to them into the middle of the floor. Now, whether those legs belonged to a male or female, deponent cannot affirm—for back I at once recoiled; the frowsy smell of the apartment, together with my *native* modesty, quite mastered my curiosity, and utterly renouncing the idea of eating breakfast in an apartment where legs, whether male or female, were just a launching out of bed, down I scrambled the step ladder—out I rushed from the house—up I bounced on my jaunting car, and peremptorily desired the driver to get on, thoroughly satisfied that no stomach but that of a wolf could bear to have its first meal for the day taken in such a den as this.

Having got a little onwards in the street, (for I almost feared that the dingy woman would have pursued me,) I asked the driver—"Is there no other place where I can get breakfast?"

"No, sir; not one that I know of!"

I desired him to get on slowly and tried my own observation, but no such thing as a house of entertainment presented itself; so off I started for the only town I was to see for thirty-five miles, without the prospect of my breakfast, except the vain hope I

entertained that I might get a boiled potato on the road.

Proceeding westward, the country for some miles retained its hilly and grassy character; and south-eastwards, as the mist occasionally rose but to fall down again, I could see the waters of Lough Con like a white line along the horizon; and though within three or four miles of Nephin it was still unseen, except that every now and then a black line high up in the sky would show itself, and it looked so elevated and so dark that you could scarcely conceive it to be the outline of a mountain, but rather the verge of a black cloud that belonged to the cumulated masses that rolled eastwards from the Atlantic.

A little further onward the hilly country ceased, and the great bog district made its appearance, into which spurs of gravel hills threw out their lines, and at once I found myself in that great western moorland that is confined eastward by the chain of lakes, consisting of Loughs Corrib, Mask, Carra, and Con; and which forms a sort of inclined plane, rising until it meets the great mountain boundary, that while it thus falls gradually inland, ends in lofty and perpendicular cliffs seaward—the battlements of Europe against the surge of the Atlantic.

I think with this great and peculiar bog district Erris ought to begin, and Tyrawly end—but it is not so, still I am in Tyrawly—but it is all bog except a line of Esker or gravel ridge along which I am travelling; and the road, though new, is soft and heavy; and here, where it leaves the Esker and must pass over a quagmire, the gravel must be spread on a



stratum of brushwood to keep it from sinking altogether; here the road shakes and heaves under you as you pass along, and you are justly apprehensive that the foundation will give way, and down you may go, horse, jaunting car, and all.

Nothing on the face of nature can surpass in dreariness this great bog land of Tyrawly. Reader, take your map, either the Ordnance one lately published, or that of Mr. Bald, the most beautiful piece of Irish map work I have ever seen—and you will observe a district, quite a blank, extending fifteen miles or more, from south to north, and about ten, from east to west—it is uninhabited, and in its present state uninhabitable. This is the great moor over which I am passing—it is not by any means a flat, there is much variety of surface—there is, therefore, abundance of fall for drainage—there are streams, lakes, tarns, and lagoons. The depth of bog is not great, there is plenty of gravel underneath, and all through are interspersed the roots and stems of the finest red pine—the soundest, the most imperishable, and the most valuable of timber. With an elevation of not more than two hundred feet above the level of the sea, why not bring this desert into cultivation? Why, I am sure I do not know—for the only difficulties I am aware of, (and those though great, are surely not insurmountable,) are the want of lime, and the extreme wetness, and windiness of the climate. The waters flow both east and west from this desert; look, reader, at the map, and you will see lines of river,—some making their way into the Moy, others into the chief river of Erris, the Owenmore. What

a place for a great national, or joint stock improvement, so near a navigable river, so near the sea. A canal might be run into the middle of it by means of a very few locks, and thus the great desiderata, a supply of limestone, be obtained from the shores of Lough Con, or of sea-wrack from the coast.

The day had cleared up while travelling in this moorland. Nephin, one of the finest of Irish mountains, now presented itself under a peculiar and very grand aspect. Unlike Croagh Patrick, though not so conical and stack like, it is loftier, and rising as it does, from the lake or bog, it assumes a massive, and at the same time, abrupt altitude—also, though the most eastward, yet it is the commanding lord of a fine *Sierra*. In this respect, it is like Ben Nevis, the great western spur of the Grampians—though it be the terminus, yet it is the loftiest of the whole range.

Indeed, as it were instantaneously, Nephin started forth from indistinctness, like a great phantom; the curtain of fog had broken up, and formed white and semi-transparent cumuli, rolling in packs along the face and down the lugs of the mountain; and here a cataract was seen leaping down a chasm, and there the sun sparkling on a mural precipice, and the sheep were speckling with white spots this green secluded gorge—while the cairn on its topmost eminence cut sharply upon the blue serene sky.

Delighted with the whole vision, I should cry out, “this is indeed a lordly mountain.” What was it to me, that I was wending my way over the brown bog? had I not one of the finest amphitheatres of mountains in all Ireland before me? and I in the



middle of the panorama ; the bog but formed the sombre foreground of a semicircular range, embracing the great moor flat, southward, westward, and northward ; to the extreme left, Nephin ; next, Maam Thomas, a mass of mountains in itself—in whose glens and corries the only red deer, *now* to be found in Ireland, except at Killarney, still have a retreat ; further westward, opens the dark gorge of the Mameratta pass, through whose deep indenture is seen, as closing the gates of Erris, Slieve Glore ; and then, more to the right is Nephin Beg, similar in form, but not so large as Nephin *big* ; and then Slieve Alp, and the Corslieve, or Loganea mountain, more lofty than any, at least it looks so, it has caught hold of a cirrocumulus cloud, and is converting it into a nimbus—and while all is bright and clear underneath, you can form no idea of the upper altitudes of this cloud compeller ; then to the right of this there is a declination in the range, and another gap appears, not so bold and distinct as Mameratta, and this is the glen through which the Owenmore urges its dark stream, and seeks the Atlantic ; then to the right, but not so high or so picturesque, is Slieve Fyogh ; and again, forming the right horn of the crescent, and abutting the sea to the north, are the Tanny hills, round and more graceful in their inland forms, but hanging over the ocean in perpendicular cliffs at Porturlin and Balderig.

While in the middle of the great bog plain, if plain it can be called, that was as various in its surface (though at a distance it looked continuously flat,) as the Curragh of Kildare, we came to a little esker or

gravel range, on the side of which the road ran, and here were one or two cabins. My driver prepared to stop here, to give his horse some oats, of which he carried a supply, and I, feeling a rather strong desire to break a fast, flattered myself that, at least, I could get a boiled potato; but, alas! I soon found I had reason to rue my delicacy of stomach at Crosmolina; for, from the inmates I got no comfort. As well as their little English could be understood, I could ascertain that there were no eggs—no potatoes in the house—they were yet to be dug for dinner; the turf was too wet to boil them in a hurry, if they had been at hand; and I must wait at least for an hour and more before they could be got ready.

Oh, then, how I repented of my fastidiousness! I am quite sure I could now have eaten a boiled pratie without salt, even suppose twenty pairs of legs were pushing their extremities out of frowsy feather beds all around me. I see that nothing is better fitted for curing a puny or proud stomach, and making it take what it can, and be thankful, than a tour in Connaught.

“Didn’t I tell yer honour,” says the driver, (an intelligent and humorous youth,) “that you were wrong not to take what God sent you in Crosmolina?”

We soon arrived at Corrig Bridge. Here you cross the Owenmore, a dark, and now, turbulent stream, its waters the colour of double X porter, the main drainage of that great bog district. There is but a police barrack and a whiskey house at this place, where you first enter Erris; and where the Owenmore first attempts to force its way through the mountains that

form the boundary of the barony, the road enters the glen, and you keep along the stream, while it winds, and foams, and wins its rapid way through the long and narrow pass. There is nothing peculiarly picturesque in this natural opening into the western desert. Corrieve rises grandly to the left; and if the clouds would allow you, you might catch many noble changes of aspect, as Gorge, Lug, and Corrie opened out before you while you passed along; but still it was savage without being either sublime or beautiful: no wood, nothing green except a few slender inches along the stream, and the little patches of oats or potatoes that were here and there won from the brown and dreary waste, only made the prevailing boggy desert more sombre.

Some of the banks whose aspect was southern, and whose declivity not too abrupt, were cultivated, and the corn was assuming a yellow hue; but far and near the eye rested on desolation; and the people, their houses, their villages, and their cattle, bespoke unassisted and unmitigated poverty. What a fine stream for the angler must be the Owenmore! I saw a little boy tossing, with his inartificial rod, a large trout from the stream. The occupation of the youth seemed more a matter of business than pleasure; he was no doubt more intent on killing than playing the fish. The means of getting a relish to his wet potatoes were what *he* sought. I thought as I saw a hank of trout lying on the bank beside him, what a value would be set on the fishing of this stream where persons would have access to pursue angling as a sport, and not as a means of appeasing hunger. I do not think I ever saw a stream better adapted for the purpose of fly-

fishing,—the river, a succession of pools and rapids, the water the colour of a buck's back. Old Isaac Walton, could he have got a place to lay his head at night, and any thing else to eat but trout, or any thing else to drink but poteen and dark water, would have found a piscatory paradise in the glen of the Owenmore.

Ravines, wild and tortuous, each the riven channel of a turbulent stream, sent on either side their tributaries to the river; in some the waters plunged over the stratification of the mica slate, in others they won their way over and under boulders of granite, gneiss, and quartz rock. .

We came to one spot where, between the road and the river, a sort of *plateau* was formed by the gravel, bog stuff, and clay brought down by two turbulent streams that tumbled from the heights on the right, and joined together before they plunged into the river; the whole of the flat was covered, as it were, with the spoils of the mountain.

“There was a village here, plaze yer honour, not long ago,” (says the driver,) “and in one night it was all, body and bones, swept away—no, not a *taste* of it, no more than there is now, was there in the morning—it was over night the greenest spot in the whole glen. A party of highlanders who were sent from Crosmolina to still hunt through these lonely hills, were benighted on their way, and they asked shelter for the night in the biggest house in the village. The night was wild and stormy, the rain came down in tubs-full, the river roared as it swept along, and from every gully and cleft in the hills came



down a moaning, as if death and destruction were to be keened for. No doubt the soldiers were glad to find shelter; and what they sought was given them, and a thousand welcomes; for though the people knew that they were going to rack the neighbours, and destroy their little pooten venture, they also knew that the poor fellows were under orders, and could not help it, and, maybe, a little civility would make them not so hard or sharp in racking the crathurs and bringing on a ruination. Any how the highlanders were admitted into Jemmy O'Hara's, the tailor's house, and they had share of all the good *tratement* he could offer; they had a roaring fire to warm them, lashens of praties and milk, and when sleepy they had the floor strewn with rushes, and there they might sleep their fill, with their feet to the fire, and mighty pleasant before they lay down was the chat; the tailor had a pair of breeches on his board a making for a *boy* that was about to make himself double, and there was many a joke cracked between the breeches maker, and those who thought it was pleasant and cool to go as father Adam did; any how there was fun and frolic within, and the play of honest and light hearts, when a rush and roaring came on, a sweeping surge of waters bursting in, carrying stones, mud, and sludge along,—the walls could not stand an instant; the whole village was swept off the face of the flat, in the twinkling of an eye; the cry of the amazed and overwhelmed inmates was lost in the universal roar of flood and storm; and when the morning sun looked in upon what was overnight a neat and snug village, nothing



was to be seen but what now meets the eye, a waste of sand, stones, and bog stuff."

The fact was, in consequence of the continued rain in this surpassingly wet climate, a mountain tarn had burst its banks, and heaving the bog that confined it, it came like a liquid wall a-down, forcing every thing along, boulders, bog timber, and sludge, until as it were in an instant, it broke upon the houses, carrying all before it—stones, timbers and bodies—and it was only some days after, that at the estuary of this river in Tullohan Bay, the bodies of the poor people were found. But *one* of the whole family was saved, and he was an only son,—sent the day preceding on a message to his uncle, who resided in a distant village; the rain had kept him from returning that night; he started early in the morning, and it was his lot to arrive first, and behold, with an astonishment that preceded indescribable agony, a strand of stones and rubbish, where, but a few hours before on the warm hearthstone, his mother had kissed him, and sent him forth with her blessing. Mr. Knight, who tells this story in his description of Erris, and who details the circumstances pretty nearly as my driver narrated them to me, for they are of so recent occurrence, and so melancholy, that they are universally known, says that he often saw the young man, a fine looking person, of excellent character, with melancholy marked on his countenance, looked on by his neighbours with respect and sorrow, and known everywhere by the appellation of "the last of the O'Haras."

The road, running by the side of the Owenmore,

and through the glen of Ballymonelly, brought me to Bangor. Here is a little town brought into existence by Major Bingham, if town it can be called, that consists only of a police barrack, two or three whiskey houses, a Roman Catholic chapel of mean appearance, and the walls of a small church, which was being built by the landlord at his own expense, and was most inconveniently located on a steep and boggy hill to the north of the town, and it would seem as if perched up there to make the attending divine worship by its toilsomeness the more meritorious.

Here the Owenmore leaves the glen through which it had worked its way for six miles, and now the country opening out to the north and south, the whole south-western district, called Ballycroy, is visible ; and through this comparatively flat and boggy land, the Owenmore winds until it loses itself in the estuary at Tulloghan Bay.

Here a new amphitheatre of mountains came into view, of which the two great hills of Achill, Slieve More, and Slieve Croghan formed the most prominent and grand objects ; and between this extreme western range, and the height on which I stood, I could see the noble harbour of Black-sod sparkling under the declining sun, and reaching far away round many a promontory and isle, and forming perhaps as fine an inland sea as any in the British isles.

The person I was standing with, and who seemed to know the district well, pointed out across the large bog waste stretching southwards, the secondary hills of Knocknadeen and Benmore. To the north of the former is the strand of Augnish, and the ferry across Tulloghan Bay ; more south, and hid from view by

the hill, is the sea lake of Fahy, on the shores of which is the old Castle of Fahy or Doona, which once belonged to Grana Uaile, and which Mr. Maxwell has made the principal scene of his novel, called "The dark Lady of Doona."

The building of this strong-hold is generally attributed to Grana Uaile ; but if I am informed aright, and that I am there can be no doubt, it is much more ancient than the Elizabethan age. No ; its rude rough walls, put together unhammered and uncemented, in that cyclopean style that baffles all antiquarian research as to its precise age, bespeak a period plunged farther back into by-gone times.

There are many traditions concerning this grey, moss-covered pile. Some say it was built by a Tuatha Danaan magician, to keep his faithless wife ; and the legend has it, that like all those who call in force to aid jealousy, woman's wile was more than a match for strong walls, or magic devices. Others say it was built by Gal M'Morni, the great rival of Fin M'Coul ; and others again assert, that it was erected by Meidhah, daughter of Eochaidh, Queen of Connaught, who, after some time, granted it to a famous champion of that kingdom, named Ceat, the son of Magach, whose exploits were memorable both as a man of stratagem and violence,—quite an Irish Ulysses ; and inasmuch as a transaction connected with this Ceat, the son of Magach, may throw some light upon the claims of our countrymen to early civilization, it may be well to state, that the Milesian, improving on the scalping habits of the American Indians, had a much more elaborate, if not more humane and elegant way of preserving trophies

of their prowess over a fallen foe. The Irish warrior when he killed his adversary in combat, broke his skull, extracted his brains, mixed up the mass well, and working the compound into a ball, he carefully dried it in the sun ; and when it became, as it always did, exceedingly hard and heavy, it was produced with no small pride as a trophy of former valour, and a *prestige* of future victory.

It is a pity that the Tipperary boys, who are so expert at braining a man with a handstone, have lost the art of thus exhibiting what they have done at fairs, patrons, or hurling matches. But to return to the Mayo champion Ceat, the son of Magach. He had heard that Connor, king of Ulster, had a brain ball of great celebrity,—for it was composed of the kernel of the finest and thickest skull that ever bore a blow of a battle-axe in Erin,—Meisgeadhra was the very bully of the island, and when Connal Cearnach contrived to break open his skull, Connal was allowed by all his competitors to be the hero of the land—even Cuchullin himself allowed that the man who could make a ball of Meisgeadhra's brains, bore the bell for prowess. Now Connal, as in duty bound, laid this ball at the feet of his liege lord, the king of Ulster, and it was a sore thing to the *elegant* and *tender* queen of Connaught that the royal northern should have such a trophy of the superior valour of his champion ; and so she sent her clever and cunning warrior Ceat, son of Magach, to get possession of the brain ball, by hook or by crook ; and it so happened that as Ceat, about this business, was nearing the green hill upon which Armagh is now built, he met the king of



Ulster's two fools, who were playing at foot ball, and one of them was just in the act of giving over, and saying he would play no more with unlucky Meisgeadhra's brain ball, as with its hardness it almost had broken his toe.

"What's that you say? (says Ceat) what ball is that?"

"Why it's King Connor's ball, he is so proud of, that we just stole for a bit of fun, and maybe we had better have left it alone, and kept to playing with a bladder, or wad of straw, or something softer."

"Give it to me (says Ceat), and I will give you apples a piece."

"With all our hearts, (says the fool,) take it with you for a nasty hard thing, bad luck to it." So Ceat, you may be sure, made off with his prize, and he never stopped until he was across the Shannon, and saw his queen's palace rise before him.

Now Connor, king of Ulster, *should* go to war to recover this trophy; his honour, his happiness were involved in the undertaking. So he assembled a mighty army, and invaded Connaught; and Meidhbh and her general, Ceat, were not slow in opposing the invader; but as Ceat depended as much on his cunning as on his force, and moreover, as his army was not as great as that of Connor's, he collected all the pretty women of the Western Land, with their bright red hair and brilliant eyes, set off by their red petticoats, yellow *chemises* and brown boddices, and knowing Connor was all tender and soft to the ladies, he got the womankind to send an invitation to the hostile king to come and have a PALAVER with them



before he resorted to the extremity of battle. Connor too easily fell into the snare, and it is well seen how Ulster has in the latter days changed its dwellers, for it would not be easy now for a Connaught man, with all the red petticoats in the province at his back, to take in John Ulsterman.

Connor, confiding in the honour of the ladies, mounted the green hill, alone, without guards or army, bowing and scraping, and saying soft things to all the pretty ones around him, when the knave Ceat, who had clad himself in woman's attire, approached the king, and having the terrible ball of brains in a sling, he winds it about his head, and prepares to hurl it at his victim. In vain the monarch fled down the hill at sight of the whirling of the fatal weapon; Ceat pursued, launched the fatal ball, and hit Connor at the side of his head, where it made an entry, and half in, and half out, appeared like a great wen.

In the meanwhile, Ceat makes off, joins the Connaught army, and retreats rapidly, content with having given a very pretty bump to his northern majesty, who, of course, returned homewards to his own country, repossessed, 'tis true, of the ball of brains, but not as an increase that was either useful or ornamental; and, when at home, the cleverest surgeon of the Irish College was consulted, and it was declared that the ball had better stay where it was. It was almost as good as a silver plate; the only thing needful was, to keep his majesty as quiet as possible, for if he fell into any of his heretofore accustomed passions, the ball would fall out, and his own softer brains follow.

Accordingly Connor was kept at ease, and though

Ceat M'Magach often invaded Ulster, and brought off prey and plunder of different sorts, and stowed them in his stronghold in Erris, yet King Connor must hear nothing of it, and so he lived for seven years, until the Friday on which our Saviour was crucified. The king was surprised at the dreadful eclipse that took place on that occasion, and in horror at the supernatural darkness, he sent for one Bacrach, a Leinster druid, to know from him the cause. The pagan prophet replied, that the cause of this fearful phenomenon arose from the barbarous murder at that hour committed by the wicked Jews on a most innocent and divine person.

On hearing this, Connor's passion got the better of him, he stormed and called for his sword, declaring he would be avenged on these cursed Jews. Demented by his fury, he took a grove of trees for the crucifiers of the Lord, and away he hacked, declaring he would be avenged on such murderers. But in the midst of his rage and fury, and by the violence of his exertions, out fell the ball of brains from the hole in his head, and out therewith, in feverish ferment, came his own cerebrum, and as kings seldom can spare the brains they have, he, of course, fell down dead.

Further, I have nought to say of Ceat, the cruel, cunning Connaught man, but that he gave his Castle of Fahy to Phelim, a great ollamh in those days, and that he went to live with, and advise Queen Meidhbh, who reigned over the trans-Shannonite kingdom for ninety years, and wielded her sceptre over the hills of Cruachan in the county of Roscommon.\*

\* See Keating's Ireland, p. 93.

## CHAPTER II.

The Old and only Pass into Erris—The Procession of an Englisher along that way—His Aid-de-camp—The Quagmire—A Picture—The Difficulty got over—The first night in Erris—The Entertainment—The man thirsty and yet delicate—The Wild Woman—The Shake Down—The New Road—The “Gentry”—Bestial Ghosts—Smart Answer of a Ghost to a Widower—A Faction and a *Ruxion* of Dead Men—Lough Carrowmore—Worship of an Errisman—Doon Donald described in a geological, antiquarian, and legendary way—The two Giants—The Irish Helen and the Fairy Queen.

STRETCHING away southward along the mountain side, the old and only pass into Erris was pointed out to me,—indeed, without any one to inform me I could have recognised this as an ancient *pace*—for so the Hiberno-English called their ways; but which in these quarters was recognised by the *rale* Irish as the Bal-lagh gorrue bridle, not carriage road, it should be called, for no mortal made carriage could have ever exercised wheel upon its track. But it did for the district in the days it was in use; for who resorted to this land of no promise? or who would venture on its unpleasant ways, but the smuggler or the outlaw? Yes, I knew one who had to come here, cruelly against his grain; but he was a military man, and he was ordered. It seems that amongst the once Protestant settlers on the Shaen estate, and especially in the Mullet, a small yeomanry corps had been raised in the year 1796, and placed under the command of Major Bingham; and to inspect this corps Brigade-

Major B—— was instructed to proceed. Now, Major B—— was an Englishman, and therefore, though a good officer, a finished (according to Dundas) disciplinarian, and quite *au fait* to the routine of duty of inspecting and reporting in ordinary cases—he neither understood Irishmen nor as yet had learned to bend to the circumstances of a wild country. Subsequent campaigning in the Peninsula and elsewhere has taught our staff officers to adjust themselves more readily—but for a major who worshipped Dundas instead of Wellington, there was no possibility of reaching Erris mounted on his big grey charger, with his stiff orderly sergeant trotting high on heavy horse behind him—he might as well have trotted to the moon! So it was suggested by some one who wished him well, that he should take some person with him in the way of a companion—not exactly an aid-de-camp, for brigade-majors of yeomanry were not entitled to that—who could speak Irish, knew the character of the mountaineers, and in case of difficulty, could resort to means of extricating him. Luckily he had in the neighbourhood where he dwelt, a young man, the son of his parish minister, who was as fit an aid as he could desire. J. G——, from whose verbal narrative I take the following account, was the major's *dragoman* on this occasion. About twenty-two years of age, six feet two inches in height, powerful in frame, and yet possessing great activity—a capital horseman—an expert swordsman—a sure shot; he had seen much service during the preceding year when the French invaded Connaught; and his sabre and his pistol had done such work, that no Spanish guerilla—not Il Pastor



himself,—need have been shy to call him brother. Speaking Irish like a native, he had also that free hearty spirit—that bold rollicking demeanour calculated to win or impose on man or woman. He was but too free with his whip or his *fist*, as the young squire of that day always was ; but if he knocked a peasant down, he took the poor fellow up again, and smiling, said some relenting or humorous thing that made the blow to be forgotten ; his blow was not half so dangerous as another's sneer. “Master John (God bless him) every day he gets up is good, even when he strikes ; and he flings a shilling so good nathurdly at a poor devil he has knocked down.” Such was the bold blade—a character not uncommon some forty years ago—who consented to attend Major B—— into Erris. They set out from the county of Sligo in the autumn of 1799, and proceeded to Newport, then the nearest civilized place, and near where commenced the mountain pass on which they were about to enter. Here they were told that it was out of the question, their being able to reach their destination, mounted on their own large horses, that they must procure ponies accustomed to bog-trotting and to the ins and outs of the country. Accordingly, J. G—— took care to procure such, and, leaving their cavalry in charge with the man from whom they procured the nags, they set out and had just reached the entrance of the first mountain pass when they saw the horsekeeper following them, and when he came up, being asked what brought him, he replied that he came on just to see how their honours were doing with his little *crathurs*.



“And with whom have you left *our* horses?”

“Troth, Molly the wife will give them wather and a lock of hay until I come back.”

“And how far will you go?”

“Och, then, what for shouldn’t I follow yez into Erris?”

Now the major was the most choleric of men, and like a good cavalier he was most particular about his horses—and to think that his good charger was left in the grooming care of Molly for sundry days, was too bad. He drew his sword, rode at the fellow, and would certainly have cut him down (for military men would do violent things in those days), had not the man leaped over a ditch, where, while the major was cursing at the *Hirish* scoundrel, his friend expostulated with the man and satisfied him that if he did not return and take good care of such a great man’s horses until they were called for, he would certainly be hanged. And now they took to the mountains, the major still chafing at the neglect and probable loss of his charger; and, as long as the road kept the mountain side where it was hard, though rough, all was pretty well; but when they descended into the boggy glens and flats, full as they were of springy quagmires, whose surface, though green and smooth, yet was most treacherously quaking and soft; their tempting verdure only enticing biped or quadruped to come in and be swallowed up quick. Across such treacherous flats—and there were many such on this road—what is called a *togher* was in most places laid, that is, a hurdle formed of interwoven brambles, hazels, furze, or even heath—this, as a foundation,

was thrown on the quag; and turf sods being laid on the surface, ponies and black cattle who knew how to tread lightly, contrived to pick their way—but woe be to the poor beast whose weight broke through the hurdle—down he went and was seen no more.

Well, on our travellers got for some miles, now riding, now alighting, and the ponies showing their agility in a way honourable to Erris, until they reached a broader glen (or rather valley,) than usual, where the mountains opened on either side, and there was a grassy slope connecting the upper grounds with the flat: then commenced a bog, and in the middle of the bog there was a lake, and on the eastern side of the lake there was one of those green, smooth quagmires, leading up far into the hills; and there had been once a togher over this, but now there were but the remains of it,—the rest had sunk down; and as the ponies looked at it, they drew back, and snorted, as much as to say, “we dare not step there.”

What's to be done now? Why, J. G—— gave a whistle, for he saw a village not far off, on the side of the hills, and the people saw the difficulty, and down they came; they had suggawns in their hands, and were naked from their middle, downwards. With these, as they arrived, the major's friend entered into a parley, and the proceeding was soon arranged. J. G—— set the example; his pony was unsaddled, and the saddle and portmanteau were fixed on the animal's side,—they then fixed their suggawns (straw ropes) round the creature's neck, and they dragged it as fast as ever they could; for if they went slowly, he would sink and be smothered: this the pony patiently bore,

it being the nature of the beast,—and so the first animal was got over. Its rider in the meantime, being agile and accustomed to bog-trotting, could leap from tussock to tussock, and when that was wanting, it was only cutting a scraw with a gowl gob, and throwing it before him; and so on it he stepped, lightly, and before it or his foot sunk, he was on another, and thus he proceeded—hop, step, and leap, until he got to firm land.

Not so the major: a tall, stiff, non-elastic man, who might be defined *homo valde perpendicularis*, cased in tight cavalry jacket, tight buckskin breeches, tight over-knee boots, how could he skip from tussock to tussock; he might as well skip from the planet Saturn to the Georgium Sidus. Well, there was much reasoning with him; and his friend taking no small pains to assure and convince him, at length he consented; still he chafed much, and was astonished because the wild Hirish did not speak English; and they just as much despised the Sassenach because he could not say a word they understood. And now his pony was cast down, and the saddle and other appurtenances placed on his flank, and thereon was the major placed, sitting sideways; and he groaned in spirit as the Paddies uttered a wild cry, and fastened the suggawns about the animal's neck, and rushed onwards through the quag, and “a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether” was made, and the pony slid along, he had not time to sink, and the feat was performed; the boys rejoicing in their success, gave a joyous shout, which rang through the hills, and as it reverberated in multiplied

echoes, the wild bulls bellowed in the gorges, the red deer started up and snorted in the corries, and the eagle soared aloft above its eyrie, and from his pride of place, looked on admiring how a brigade-major is transported into Erris. If ever this my narrative of journey, not a tour, undertaken forty years ago, into this far west, shall be published, I hope that my bookseller will procure some Cruikshank to draw my Saxon soldier getting over a PACE in Erris; and before he takes pencil in hand, I wish him to see the wild scenery, the costume, the gestures, the groupings of the people, and then let him contrast my Armadillo of a major, with his equally stiff and wooden orderly, all covered as they are with mud, the bog begriming the pipe-clay; and then the loose, little, jocund figure of J. G——, looking on with most malicious glee at the transit of his commander; and just, sir, if you please, fix the group as the major is half way across the quagmire, sitting so dolorously, while the spalpeens are tugging most determinately at the poor, patient pony's head. Reader, would it not make a good group? I opine it would.

This was not the only pass of the same character that they had to encounter before the evening closed on them, and they had not yet got near the Mullet, and now stop they must, for who dared proceed along such a road in the dark. It, therefore, was well for them that, just in time, a village was at hand, and at its best house they applied for shelter. Had its tenants been a little more civilized, perhaps they would have refused, convinced, as they must have been, that



no proper accommodation could be afforded; but not at all aware of the *comforts* such *quality* wanted, they said "come in, and a thousand welcomes." This best house consisted of a cabin without a door; two low orifices there were, one in front and the other opposite to it. According as the wind blew, one of these was built up with loose sods, taken from the upper surface of the bog, the other was closed with turf creels to keep the cattle from entering. Within, this habitation consisted of two rooms,—one the general receptacle for all animals that might enter, the other was behind the hob, or fire-place, and was divided from the other by a long straw mat that hung from the low ceiling, and served for a door. On the hearth was burning, though it was summer, a large bright turf fire, and over the fire hung a pot in which a quantity of potatoes was boiling. The inner apartment had one or more truckles that served to keep beds and bedding from resting on the damp floor. Some few wooden vessels of the rudest construction were deposited on a dresser in the outside room,—and this was the house and its furniture. Luckily, the night promised to be fine, and the ponies were picketted along a dry ditch where they could get grass. Potatoes, eggs, and butter, such as it was, could be got for supper; and in those days, good poteen was almost as plentiful as bog-water. The inner room being resigned to the major and his friend, all was done that hospitality could supply, for it was all that the owners could give or knew to be requisite.

Now, J. G—— was quite aware of all this, and, sporting on the mountains, he had often put up with



no better ; but what was the field-officer to do ? no table-cloth, no plate, no knife ; he must hold his potato in his hand, and peel it with his nails ; he must manage his egg as he best might. Well, all this was possible, but what was he to drink out of ? The vessels were overhauled, and nothing was forthcoming but a wooden meather, carved out of a block of soft wood, and capable of containing about a gallon, and two smaller vessels called noggins, also made of wood but composed of small staves, and bound together with hoops. These utensils seemed never to have been washed ; the vestiges of sour milk adhered in yellow curdy matter to the sides, and they had such a heavy cheesy smell, that, when paraded before the major as his banquetting cups, he swore he would go and lap water out of the next ditch like a dog, rather than put his lips to such abominations. Here, again, his friend cast about, and in the most pleading terms the Irish tongue was capable of, entreated some one to go and look through the village for a glass or earthenware cup. Now the people, who really were anxious to oblige, set on the inquiry, and a boy was hurried off to the sea-shore, where lived Paddy Laval, who had dealings with smugglers, and maybe *he* had a glass. Off the gossoon went, and in no time returned with the bottom of a broken Dutch decanter, but so encrusted with filth and sediment, that it took J. G—— some time before it became in such a state as to suit the mouth and nose of his commander. And now, suppose the potatoes are boiled, and they are emptied out from the pot on the well-scoured table,—and eggs, whose insides are not dirty, are boiled so hard as

to be held safely in the hand, and J. G—— and the orderly condescend to discuss a roll of butter so full of cow's hairs that it matted in their teeth,—but still it is *kitchen for the praties*. But the major wouldn't touch a morsel of it ; and he cursed the Hirish and their nastiness, and here it was well for him that he was not understood ; and now, after the metal pot had done its duty in cooking the potatoes, it was rinsed and put down again over the fire, filled with spring water, and fragrant poteen is procured from a keg taken from a corner, so sweet in itself, that it required no sugar, and punch with the boiling water was about to be made to wash down the meal, and the major—nothing loathe to quaff the only acceptable thing he saw, for his residence in Sligo had made his mouth acquainted with the peat reek of poteen, and he had learned to love it well ;—and now he was preparing to charge his uncouth glass with an ample supply of the cordial liquor, and while telling over the day's adventures, he was just thinking whether it might not be best for him to put both his hands to the vessel as he lifted it to his lips, when a female, who had entered unobserved, as all comers may do into any cabin ; the filthiest, most ragged, most squalid of her sex, her dark hair streaming down her smoke-browned neck, her black eye bright with partial madness, her face sharp, sickly, and wrinkled, her skinny lips not quite covering the teeth, that stuck out prominently as the fangs of some carnivorous creature,—slided on behind the feasters, and, with a demented woman's astuteness, cowered behind the major, and, while he was just preparing to lift his grog, she snatched the glass from

under his arm, and ran off into the obscure part of the apartment, where she was heard laughing and jabbering Irish in that joyous tone that denotes great triumph.

It would be impossible to describe the utter astonishment, the dismay of the major, which was worked into an intensity of wrath, when an instant after the glass vessel was heard to fall on the floor, and shatter to pieces; for the wild woman having secured her prize, of course proceeded to enjoy it, and she never having drank before out of any thing but a wooden vessel, and, moreover, seldom if ever taking any hot liquor, when the very warm glass touched her lip she flung it from her in terror, and while it broke to pieces on the floor, she escaped from the house as rapidly as she had entered.

Now what was to be done with the major? he had started up and made for his sword, swearing that he was insulted, and let what would happen he would be revenged; he would cut the head off the man of the house, he would show that the king's officer should not be treated that way—and it was no easy matter to appease and satisfy him that it was a poor demented creature, who roamed the world and had access, as is the case with all such, to every house, who had done him the wrong. Eventually our major was coaxed to put up with one of the noggins well scoured, with which to make his potations of poteen punch, which were not unfrequent, until drowsiness came on.

And now for the sleeping. I have said there was an inner room, in which were what served for bedsteads, and something like bed-clothes. Of course

our soldier would have nothing to do with aught but the bedstead, on which he directed fresh heath to be strewn, and thereon he and his young friend slept until daybreak, wrapt in their military cloaks. And now both started up ; no dressing, no toilet. It was expedient as soon as possible to move into the open air, and they had to pass through the outer room, and this was indeed a novel and curious sight. My friend assured me he never was more amused in his life than at such a display of human snorers, covering the whole floor as with a living carpet. This was the first time he, though accustomed to cabin habits, had witnessed the primitive but not promiscuous mode of sleeping ; he has however often seen it since ; this is what is called sleeping in *stradogue*, and is *regulated* as follows :—the floor is thickly strewed with fresh rushes, and stripping themselves entirely, the whole family lie down at once and together, covering themselves with blankets, if they have them, if not, with their day clothing, but they lie down *decently*, and in order ; the eldest daughter next the wall farthest from the door, then all the sisters, according to their ages ; next the mother, father, and sons in succession, and then the strangers, whether the travelling pedlar, or tailor, or beggar ; thus the strangers are kept aloof from the female part of the family, and if there be an apparent community there is great propriety of conduct. It is not my purpose to describe further the brigade-major's route through Erris. It may be supposed he did not confine himself to a single inspection, for there is a saying amounting to an adage, that he who visits Erris once will certainly come again ;



the reader can but judge whether the major had reason.

Proceeding from Bangor, the road goes straightly on over an ugly tract of moorland, which declines southward to where the Owenmore creeps through the desolate bog flats, and rises northwards towards the mountains that skirt the coast, which mountains, though forming magnificent mural precipices facing the Atlantic, have neither height nor form to render them interesting, as they descend gradually inland. Alighting in order to save the horse, as he struggled up a long hill and heavy road, and chatting to the driver, the *boy*—a shrewd and pleasant fellow—says, “Oh, sir, this is a great country for the ‘*gentry*.’”

“Gentry,” said I, “not a single house can my eye light on in which a gentleman could reside.”

“Oh, yer honour, I don’t mane squires, I mane the ‘good people.’”

“A fair distinction,” said I, smiling, “when we talk of Mayo, for I have yet to learn that they are specially entitled to the distinction of being good people.”

“Why, it’s by no manner of *manes* that I intend gintlemen; I mane the fairies.”

“Well, what do you know of them?”

“Why, sir, I’ll tell you what I heard a man say one day, not long ago. I was bringing some Erris people on this very jaunting-car from the fair of Ballina. They were talking, as they walked up this very hill, of accidents happening their cattle, and one of them tould what I am now going, as well as I can remember, to say to your honour. ‘There was a neighbour of mine,’ says he, ‘coming one evening, as we



now are, from a fair in the "Arable"—*that*, your honour, is the name the Erris mountaineers give the good land in our country about Ballina and Crosmolina—and just on this very road he met a concourse of people and cattle coming along as if returning from a fair, and as he cast his eye on the drove of bastes, sure enough he saw, though he could scarcely believe his eyesight, two bullocks of his own which some time before were drowned in a bog hole. 'By dad,' says he, 'this is quare; but any how here are my cattle—I'd swear any where to my own brand; I'm in the best of good luck this night, and home I'll drive them.' So with his stick he tould off his two bullocks from the rest, and giving them a good welting to force them on, he was hastening away with his recovered property, when he hears a man following and shouting after him, 'Where are you going with my bastes?' So he stopt a little, and up comes a man he knew once very well, but who was long ago dead and buried, and that he had good *raison* to know, for he was first husband to his own wife (Paddy being married to a widdy). 'Och then, Paddy M'Cormick, where are you going, you thieving son of a ——, with my cattle?'

" 'They're, not yours I'd give my Bible oath, but they're my own. Wouldn't I swear to them any where, and my own brand on them? And why should you, Terry Barrett, be after *claming* them, seeing as how you are long ago dead and buried, and I am married to your widdy?'

" 'What's that to you, you ignoramus, you? what call has the likes of you to know the ins and outs of

these matters? and, at any rate, I have as good a right to your *dead* cattle, who died honestly in the boghole of Poulshesare, as you have to my *living* wife. I won't say, Paddy, who has the best of the bargain, but any how I'll have the cattle;' and with that he hits him a polthoge with his cudgel, and Paddy was not backward you may swear; but they were not left long to themselves, for up comes a faction of Terry's people, and what was strange all out, every one of them Paddy knew to be long ago dead—shouldn't he know it, when he was at their wake and berrin'—and they fell to a beating of Paddy until down he went, the senses knocked out of him, and there he lay until morning, and you may be sure when he awoke there was neither man nor baste to be seen, but all around his head was a crop of fairy musheroons growing. 'Och, then, if ever I look,' says Pat, 'after dead cattle, may musheroons be my bed instead of the best of feathers.' Paddy did not do much good after this; he is alive still, but he is not himself since he had to do with his wife's dead husband and his own dead bullocks."

We now came in sight of Lough Carrowmore, the largest lake in Erris; it is one of the three lakes which Partholan, if we are to believe Keating, discovered on his inspection of Ireland after his landing thereon—others had not yet been formed. But though it be old, it is ugly; the eye looking northward from the road we are travelling on, taking in nearly its greatest length, about four miles; and it is far from beautiful—the surrounding hills are neither grand nor varied in their forms, the desolate bog comes down

on all sides, and surrounds it with its melancholy cincture ; the islands are few and flat, and not even a furze, or bramble bush decorates their stony and wave-washed shores, over which the cormorant urges its slow and ungainly flight, and from whose rocks the curlew sends its melancholy pipe. I have not seen since I left the borders of Lough Derg, (where superstition disgraces what nature has made but ugly,) a more desolate, and at the same time unpleasing water, than Lough Carrowmore. By-and-by, passing westward, I crossed the Munhin, the drain of this lake—which derives its name from the faithless wife of Dhomnel, the giant of Glencastle, having been drowned here by her paramour. This considerable stream falls into Tullohan Bay, after a short course of two miles. Certainly, the country affords great facilities for inland navigation, which might be readily and cheaply resorted to. Here is a lake not more than fifteen feet above the level of the sea—at its northern extremity within three quarters of a mile of Broadhaven, and at its southern, sending its waters, after a course of two miles, into Blacksod Bay ; but who are to navigate, and what is to be conveyed, when there are neither commerce, manufactures, nor agriculture ; neither intelligence, industry, nor capital ; when the great territorial owners seem to brood, as it were hatching, over the desolation all around ?

Proceeding westward, the road ascends, and appears as if it would top an eminence, and then keep the line of a mountain-ridge, when all of a sudden, it takes a turn, and descends rapidly between a steep bank of loose and disarranged rocks, which show

that they have undergone a disruption and change as if by fire, and a trap-dyke protrudes from below, and declares itself to be the cause of the changes in colour and texture of the adjoining rock formations. This fine specimen of a trap-dyke runs, as it ought to do, according to the accurate geologist of this section of Ireland, Archdeacon Verschoyle, from west to east; and now the road sinks down into a very pretty glen, whose steep banks are fringed with hazels, birches, and other brushwood, that might show something like wood, if allowed to grow, and which, even as it is, are most acceptable to the eye, as the whole of Erris is without the least appearance of a tree—so much so, that it is said some Errisians when they first saw a tree in Tyrawly, knelt down, and would have worshipped it as something super-earthly.

In the centre of this green and well-sheltered oval vale, rises an oblong eminence, which nature seems to have intended for a fortress, for it rises on every side to the height of about one hundred feet—perhaps this is part of a huge trap-dyke that has been uprisen, intersecting the mica slate. On the top of this picturesque eminence, whose sides are not now so steep as to be deprived of grassy verdure, are the remains of a doon or cassiol, whose mounds run conformably to the oval formation of the eminence, and which bear evidence of being one of the most ancient and important strongholds in the district. This glen is called Glencastle, and the fortress, Doon Donald. This cassiol put me in mind of the Old Doon, near Dundalk, which, because erected on a rock of an oblong form, like this here, and having the appearance



of an upset hull of a ship, General Vallencey and Governor Pownel, together with other imitative antiquarians, have called it, a Ship Temple; and, indeed, neither one nor the other was any more a ship temple, nor any other sort of temple than General Vallencey's nose. Glen Castle, or rather Cassiol, is an ancient Doon of the Tuatha Danaan, who possessed Ireland, and while using it, did not abuse it like their hectoring successors, the Milesians or Scots. This is the race that their more stupid but ferocious successors called Magicians and Giants, because they were more clever and civilized; and who could not understand how such religious and military works could be executed except by superhuman intelligence and strength. They were unaccountably exterminated by a far inferior people, just as the existing races of American red men have destroyed the more intelligent people that flourished before them, and who have left incontestable traces of their existence in the remains of their arms and their buildings, as now found along the Ohio, and in other central parts of the North American continent. In the same way the Tuatha Danaan have here left the cromleachs, the giants' graves, the stone circles, the doons and cassiols, the Cyclopean walls, and the crypts and covered caves, that are to be found under our moats, and raths, and cairns. The head and foot stones of what has been called a giant's grave still remain here, near the Doon—it is about forty feet long—also a cromleach—but as this lay in the way of the new road, the *iligant* engineer ordered it to be upset, and there the ruin lies, and may lie, for stones are cheap, as a monument of a projector's



taste, who would not deflect his road half a perch, in order to preserve it. Of course, the Doon of this glen has its legends, and as I am not one, as all who know me are aware, to pass any thing of the kind without narrating it, I shall now, as briefly as may be, record how this fortress which in old time was considered to be the gate of Erris, as commanding the only practicable pass into the arable district of the Mullet, was called Doon Donald.

Donald Doolwee was a giant, as all Danish kings were in the days when they conquered Ireland—surely they must have been strong and big entirely, or how could they have kept the valiant Milesians in subjection for two centuries?—and was not Ogier Le Danois, immortalized in French romance, a giant?—hence the name Ogre. But be this as it may, our giant ruled with his strong hand all this *fine* tract of mountain and bog, and having such a fortress, a Doon Donald, he was not only stout, but rendered also unconquerable by the incantations of a witch, who, to make him invincible, came from the Ocean Isles. One would think that all these natural and acquired excellences might have made Doolwee capable of holding his own; but not so, for he had a pretty wife—and he himself, it seems, though stout, was not made for lady's love. And now came the trial of his powerful means. A potent northern, a giant also, entered the mouth of Broadhaven, landed his dark multitudes, and seized on Doolwee's fortresses of Dooncarton and Doonkeegan. The two armies met in the bay of Inver—they fought on the sands—and Doolwee, though unconquerable himself, was unable

to conquer the Vickyng; and, what is worse, Doolwee's wife saw the stranger fighting in all the pride of his beauty with her *ordinary* husband, and love got the better of loyalty in her bosom. Well, the battle was a drawn fight—the Vickyng returned to Dooncarton, and Donald retired with his false wife, Munhanna, to the Doon of the glen; and here the Irish Helen, urged by curiosity and love, used all her wily art to induce her good man to propose an armistice, which he acceded to, and a white flag was hung out from his Doon, which was responded to by another from one of the enemy's strongholds. This brought about a treaty of peace—a division of territory—and an invitation of the Vickyng to the fortress of Doon Donald. Why need we particularize?—enough it is for *us* to state, that Munhanna fell, disgraced, and then betrayed her husband. In moments of dalliance with her paramour, she was tempted, as Dalila was, to disclose the secret of her husband's invincibility. This, however, she could not do at once, and for the best of reasons, because, though she was aware that he had a charmed life, she yet knew not in what that charm consisted. But now she resorted to Dalila's tricks, and fondled her strong man and coaxed him to divulge his secret; but this he must not do without the consent of the enchantress, and still the wife wheedled, and, to please this false one, he muttered the wild rhyme, by means of which he could bring the powerful one to his presence; and lo! she came, the awful Mornæ, with a human skull in her hand, and cried, "Donald Doolwee, here I am, from the caves of the roaring sea. What is your pleasure?"

"I have called you," said the giant, "to tell this wilful wife of mine the secret of my invincibility."

"Daughter of the Lord of Crohan Aigle," cried Morna, "I comply with your unhappy request; but (stretching forth her hand, wherein was held the skeleton head) you must swear, placing your hand on THIS, that the sins of the soul that animated this body and of all his forefathers, may rest on yours at the terrible day of doom, and blast you to perdition, if ever you reveal the secret." The wife laid her hand on the skull—what will not love, ay, unhalloed love do!!!—The skull gave out a moan as if in warning; but in vain—she invoked the curse—she swore. And then the enchantress rose as a wreathing mist into the air, and, when high above, she cried—"There is a ringlet of my hair surrounding the loins of your husband—until the knot which ties it be separated, no weapon can affect his life." Saying this, she vanished as in wrath, and the thunder rolled and the lightnings flashed, and an earthquake opened that ravine which winds now so picturesquely about Glen Castle.

What need we proceed to narrate in detail the misdeeds of that Connaught Dalila. Donald was made drunk—he slept in sottishness—his knot was cut—the Vickyngyr admitted—he drew his sword, and Doolwee's head was severed from his body, and sent rolling in all its ghastliness down the steep sides of the Doon; and the morning sun, as it rose over the eastern hill, saw the raven banner of the sea-king floating over the ramparts of Dooncarton.

How long did the false woman enjoy her new

lover? Just so long as her paramour's fancy was steady—and where is that ever secure when there is not virtue and respect to keep it from veering? The Vickyng *must* go to visit his other dominions—he must mount the dark rider of the ocean to go to the northern isles; and he commands his black steed to be brought out to take him to the seashore, and Munhanna implores to be taken along with him, and he condescends to listen to her entreaty: she is mounted up behind, and on the sea-king rides till he comes to the broad and turbulent stream that flows from Lough Carrowmore, and the flood is high and loudly rushing on in red fury between its rocks—the sea-king plunges in—the steed struggles and swims—the false fair one shrieks and clings to her lord—and now he ruthlessly shakes her off and down she goes: the boiling surge whisked her along and engulphed her, and she was no more seen.\*

Onward went the cruel northern, glad to be rid of one who might yet betray him in his sleep; and a crane was now seen flapping its heavy wings over the roaring waters, and it shrieked with a voice that sounded like the word *revenge*, and then she urged her flight towards the cliffs of Inniskea, where, according to O'Flaherty and other chroniclers, she stands and will stand alive and solitary until the end of time.

\* I am indebted to Miss Knight for this legend, which is to be found more at large in Mr. Knight's work on Erris.



## CHAPTER III.

Road from Glencastle to Belmullet—Story of a Cow's Ghost!!!—The Two Bogs—The Danes—The Home Sweet Home of a poor Errisman—Adaptive Powers of the Human Frame—The Newest Town in Ireland—A Rarity in Erris—A Fine Day—Old Names indicative of Old Events—A badly located, contrasted with a well-placed town—Public Day of Baptism—Gay Attire—Ancient taste for Yellow Colours—A little prejudice—Tourists should not waste the mornings—The features of the Mullet—An importer of Bad Cattle—The Queen of Erris—Its Pope and its Squireen—A discomfortable Parsonage—The Cliffs—Adventurous man and a Poulmashanthana; of which you shall know the meaning when you read the chapter.

THE road from Glencastle to Belmullet is for the first two miles interesting, because, ascending an eminence, you get a sight of Blacksod Bay, which, at this moment, under a partial sun-gleam, (for the day was most uncertain, now shower, now sunshine,) showed off all its great extent, as it flowed away between the mountains of Achill and Ballycroy. And now I rose a little higher, crossed a ridge, and saw another fine inland sea northwards; Broadhaven, with all its magnificent accompaniments of the conical islets, called the Stags, and the lofty cliffs of Benwee and Erris heads, that protect its entrance on either side. I was very fortunate in having a clear hour, just now at the point where I *could* see these magnificent bays, coming north and south to meet each other, and the declining sun gilding with all its splendour enormous banks of clouds, and underneath them casting its softened light on the curious and variously-formed cliffs that rose so boldly on every side. Oh, what a glorious day I shall have to-morrow and the



next, surely the weather will, and must take up, and give me an opportunity of seeing, during the limited time I can command, these interesting shores.

I travelled along the ridge that divides Blacksod Bay from Broadhaven. On the left of the road, about a mile distant, is Tourglas, where are some subterraneous apartments, excavated, as the people say, by the Lochlinne, (the Danes,) and near which have been found some celts of bronze and stone; here also is a rath where the natives say they see the ghosts of the cattle they have lost; or which, according to their conviction, the "good people" have carried away. That this is not a mere *fancy* of the imagination, I have a *fact* to adduce which has general credit, and which, if there be any truth in the adage of "vox populi," should be relied on even beyond "Erris Bounds."

Phelim Barrett, a man well to do in the world, was getting on like all his neighbours, that is, just as their fathers before them did. He was married, of course; had his cabin full of children in one end of it, leaving room for the cow and two pigs at the other, not to say any thing of a goat, a dog, and a cat. But Phelim's course was not all along fated to run smooth, for his cow fell over a precipice, and her leg was broken, and there was nothing for him to do but to cut her throat, and though she was any thing but fat, yet making the best of a bad bargain, and as half a loaf is better than no bread, Phelim salted the carcass, and if he was short of milk, at any rate he and his had plenty of beef while it lasted, barring that it was the least taste in life tough.

Well, Christmas time was over, and Lent coming on, and Phelim was very lavish of his meat, seeing that it would be of no use after Shrovetide ; when one evening, long after the sun was set, he hears a noise at the door ; just like the lowing of a cow, so thinking it was one of the neighbours' cattle that had got into his potato garden, he went out, and sure enough he saw by the light of the moon a beast standing at his door, for all the world like his own brindled cow ; he felt her left horn, and found his own brand, he saw the same round white spot on her right hip, and her tail was short as was his own cow. "Och, thin, Nanny Voe, my jewel, I'd swear that you were your own self, barring that I have been eating you these five weeks ;" with this expression of hope and doubt, he called on his wife to come out and help to verify the fact ; and, in the mean time, Phelim began to pull underneath, to ascertain whether Nanny Voe had any milk in her teats, and while doing so, off the cow bounced. Phelim, not liking to part with her, made a grasp at her tail, which catching, and still the cow proving too strong to be stopped, off both man and beast went as fast as a cow could canter, and hither to this very rath she came with Phelim clinging to her tail. Now there is a round hole in the centre of the rath, about as wide as would admit a man's body ; to this the cow made, and down she went, and Phelim would have gone with her, only that before he was sucked in, he disentangled himself from the tail, and home he went very thankful to the Virgin, and all the saints, who saved him from being taken by "the gentry," who,

no doubt desired, as they had the ghost of his cow, to have his own also, to have and to hold till the day of judgment.

Now the road takes the northern side of the ridge, and skirts the extreme shallow end of the Estuary of Broadhaven, where it flows up to Belmullet; like all such shallows, this is ugly, particularly so *here*, where the brown bog comes down and meets the water's edge, and it is hard to say which is the ugliest, the muddy waste of a wide estuary, now that the tide is out, the sea gulls screaming, and the curlew piping dolorously, or the dreary bog banks, along which the road passed, at whose sides were here and there constructed some of the most wretched hovels that in all my wanderings in my poor native country it has been my lot to observe.

I have seen and described the oval huts of the natives of Achill, where art had not arrived at the craft of raising a gable-end, but still *these* were over-ground, they were constructed of stones, and their inmates, whether squatting or reclining therein, might be dry as well as warm.

But the dwellers *here* were bog troglodytes—the foundations of their dwellings are sunk eight feet or more below the surface of the surrounding black bog, the walls are constructed of wet sods, cut off from the surface of that bog; there is no door or door-case, no chimney; the orifices by which the people enter, and through which the smoke *should* issue, are filled up as suits the wind, with bundles of heath or turf-kreels, filled with potato-stalks; a drain

comes out from under the floor of the dwelling, from which the superabundant moisture escapes, or else it would be a common bog hole; but, by its means, the water that springs abundantly from the sides and bottom, flows away, and the people sitting or standing within, are free from actual overflow. Observing, as I did, the prattling, lively urchins playing about these cabins, and the certainly not unhealthy aspect of the adults, I could not but admire that wonderful adaptiveness of the human constitution that could enable people, both young and old, to remain healthy in the midst of superabundant moisture, which, in consequence of the constant and large fire necessarily kept up on their hearths, must be in a state of misty smoky steam, a sort of perpetual vapour bath; and, on inquiry, I do not find that pulmonary complaints, or even rheumatism are especially prevalent in this district; I believe there is not much longevity, which is seldom the case when the diet is low, I also have reason to consider that there is not much premature decay.\*

\* The cabins all through Ireland in the 17th century were not unlike these Erris dwellings, as would appear from the following *poetic* description published in the year 1689:—

Built without either brick or stone,  
Or couples to lay roof upon,  
With wattlets upon wattles ty'd,  
Fix'd in the ground on either side,  
Did like a shaded arbour show  
With seats of sods and roof of straw.  
The floor beneath with rushes laid—'stead  
Of tapestry, no bed or bedstead,  
No posts, nor bolts, nor hinges in door,  
No chimney, kitchen, hall, or windor,

I now had got to Belmullet, the *youngest* town in Ireland, and like all young things, it is comparatively fresh and fair, though, as I have just stated, the approach to it was deformed by these wretched bog-huts I have just described ; the town itself contains few thatched cabins, but consists of small streets of moderately sized slated houses, branching off from a little square, or market-place ; the shops looked to be well furnished with not only necessities, but articles conducive to comfort and convenience. Buildings are going on, and speculation is progressing. When it is considered that fifteen years ago there was not a trace of a town here, it may be supposed that Mr.

But narrow dormants stopt with hay  
 All night, and open in the day.  
 On either side there was a door,  
 Extent from roof unto the floor,  
 Which they like hedgehogs stop with straw,  
 Or open as the wind does blow ;  
 And though they reach from top to floor,  
 The man crept in upon all-four.  
 Betwixt the doors there was a spot  
 I' th' middle, to hang o'er the pot,  
 And had an engine in the nick—  
 For pair of tongs a broken stick.

\* \* \* \*

Where in one end the parted brother  
 Was laid to rest—the cows in t'other.

\* \* \* \*

The custom of sleeping stradogue, as described in the preceding chapter, was, it appears, common all over Ireland 150 years ago, for the same *elegant* rhymers thus describes a dormitory :—

Under a plad\* which did extend  
 'Cross the whole floor from end to end,  
 On litter laid, like horse at manger,  
 Which served for family and stranger.

\* Blanket or covering.



Carter, the landlord, has made a good speculation, and has reason to rejoice in the prosperity he has, in a measure, given birth to.\*

By inspecting the map it will be seen that this town is situated on the eastern side of the very narrow isthmus that connects the peninsula of the Mullet with the mainland. The arm of Broadhaven that flows up is shallow, and is only navigable for light craft; the arm of Blacksod Bay is much more important, and a commodious quay is constructed, along which vessels of some tonnage can discharge

\* In 1825, when Belmullet was commenced, there was not a tradesman residing there; they were obliged to be brought at great inconvenience from the interior of the country, Ballina, Castlebar, Westport, and Newport. A few were then in Bingham's town, but chiefly engaged by Major Bingham. At present, they find plenty of employment where they reside, and in the country. Since the separation of the religious duties of the two parishes, a clergyman of the Church of England resides in Kilcommon, until lately at Bangor, but now has taken ground for building a house in the immediate neighbourhood of Belmullet. The increase of arable land in and about the town since its erection is most extraordinary. On a map lately made of it and the townlands next east for  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles, this is shown, and the lands divided into pieces, so that each individual lives on and improves his own holding; the whole system of commonage being entirely abolished in those parts, as well as in the direction of the peninsula. On the whole, it is one of the most gratifying spectacles of improvement that can be seen any where, considering its state ten years ago, compared to what it is at present; and if we look to the future, we can have no less pleasing anticipations: and considering the position of the town itself for trade, and that it forms the nucleus from which improvements in agriculture will extend, by its influence and example, to the more remote quarters of the country. This will be greatly facilitated by the late division of property between the principal proprietors, Messrs Carter and Bingham.—*Knight's Erris*, p. 146.

or load. But I am not going to write statistically of this promising young thing of the west. Near the quay is a very pretty cottage, in which resides Captain Nugent, commander of the Coast Guard and a magistrate. Having the privilege of his acquaintance, I found a ready home at his house, where his excellent wife did not disgrace the hospitable characteristics of Caledonia, her native land.

Here I staid nearly three days, the first was Sunday. There is no church as *yet* built in this town; of course there is a Roman Catholic chapel. Divine service was performed in an unfinished school-house, and there was a small but very respectable congregation. I was given to understand by the minister, a man well calculated to raise the character of his church in a new place, that the attendance would have been larger, but that the fineness of the day tempted most of them to go to the regular and long-established church at Bingham's-town.

Captain Nugent having some magisterial business at that place, about three miles off, proposed to take me there in his gig, after divine service. This I was glad to do, it giving me the opportunity of seeing Mulleteers in their Sunday dress and appearance. Nothing could be finer than the evening; it was really a pet of a day. A calm quietude pervaded the heavens, and air called on ocean to repose, after the turmoil of many a stormy day; nothing indeed could be more transparent and balmy than the atmosphere, the mountains before us of all forms and elevations, and giving the varieties of their outlines and surraces with singular distinctness.

As we drove into the Mullet, along an excellent road leading to Bingham's-town, I asked my companion what meant the word Mullet? He said he could assign no other etymology, than that the peninsula was like a fish of that name; and, reader, if you take up the map, you will observe that this tract, comparatively low and sandy, is fish-like in its form; the large head and shoulders northwards, the southern end terminating in a sort of tail. How the Ocean could have spared this low tract, when it carried away or submerged so much of the western territory, is to me unexplainable. If names are at all indicative of ancient events, it would appear that the peninsula was separated as it now is from the mainland, since Ireland became inhabited, for Blacksod Bay is called the *new sea* (Gloss Arragah,) in contradistinction to the Atlantic, which is called the *old sea* (Shan Arragah,)—I am not sure of the spelling; but as in other places I shall say more of this matter, I now proceed with my friend the captain.

As we proceeded along the road, sometimes passing through a boggy tract, oftener through a sandy one, the corn was just beginning to turn in the small fields on either side of the road. Here the tillage was bad, the ridges such as I have described in Achill, the fences miserable, and the ground almost as productive of weeds as crops; yet, after all, the barley and oats were abundant, owing no doubt to the quantity of sea-weed that can be here procured.

We drove into Bingham's-town along an excellent road. A small church is on the right hand, and on

the left a large unfinished building, intended by the landlord for some manufactory, but now, roofless and dilapidated, it stands a monument of a failure, as indeed is the whole town, or rather village, which appears to have been originally unhappily located, and is now sinking fast into decay in consequence of its too great proximity to its younger sister, Belmullet. I cannot well conceive what Major Bingham's motive was for this location, on a property where the sea was every thing and the land comparatively nothing; where no town could be expected to thrive that had not a ready and commodious quay for the purposes of the corn export trade and fishery. Why build this long street *inland*? No wonder that it is going to decay. No wonder Dean Lyons, who it appears loves not the landlord, calls it Beggar's-town instead of Bingham's-town; and, indeed, the good father's own house, though originally a large and commodious concern, has been so wrecked by the last January storm, that it and other tenements presented an appearance as if the town had been bombarded by an hostile fleet. The place was full of people, dressed in their best attire; the service of mass was over, but hundreds were crowding around the chapel, for public\* baptism was going on, and all the parents and

\* I think in a religious, social, and (if I may be allowed to say) a picturesque view, that the institution of public baptisms at stated periods, is a great improvement in the Roman Catholic Church. It restores to this initiatory Christian Sacrament its ancient and ecclesiastical solemnity; it substitutes for the unholy frivolity of a christening the sacredness of a dedicatory rite; and, when accompanied by a pulpit address, calculated to inform the understanding and affect



gossips in their best attire were awaiting the ceremony.

Were I to judge from the crowds of people I saw in good and new attire, I should suppose that the people of the Mullet were by no means in great and squalid poverty, and it surprised me not a little, observing the miserable hovels that on every side presented themselves, how they could turn out so many well-dressed people. I suppose it is the case, that the people have acquired a taste for personal adornment without the desire for household and house comforts? The women all wore highly-flounced muslin caps; they seemed to affect greatly red and deep yellow colours, and some of the dresses, almost approaching to orange, put me in mind of Archbishop M'Hale's anger against the Achill women, when they came to meet his grace in what he conceived to be orange garments.

We drove through this miserable and abortive town, dying away as it is within sight of its more prosperous neighbour, and proceeded in the direction of Bingham Castle. As we came out of the street wretched hovels presented themselves on all sides, some huddled together, and apparently ready to tumble, with the thatch almost all torn off by the preceding winter's storms, and the walls melting away under the protracted summer's rains; water running

the heart, it must have a most beneficial effect on the congregation. Baptisms in the church, are now almost exclusively used in the Established Church, but it would be a great improvement if they were held at stated times, and in the face of the congregation.



round and from under the house. No human habitations, I believe, in the broad earth so wretched ; and yet, as I have before observed, the children that played around these hovels were happy healthy things. Just before us, about half a mile from Bingham's-town, and where an arm of Blacksod Bay came in, my companion showed me a rather handsome but small pier, constructed, no doubt, to serve as the port of this city of the Mullet. This pier, constructed at the public expense, is placed, as my companion pointed out, at the wrong side of the inlet, and when the prevailing winds blow it is utterly of no value. No wonder that not even a fishing boat lay alongside of this very useless *public* work. There is a large house near this pier which, though inhabited, is much out of repair ; a field of about four acres surrounded in a great measure this building, which, though capable, from its dry position and vicinity to the sea, to be either a good pasture field or meadow, yet from the way in which it was treated seemed to be altogether unproductive. It appeared to have been ploughed, from the lay, a considerable time ago, and there the upturned sods remained just as the plough had left them, and it seemed to be the pigs' good pleasure to keep continually rooting away amongst these upturned sods, so as to hinder any new verdure from attempting to cover again this deplorable field. Struck with its appearance, I asked my companion how the owner, in a country where grass land was so scarce, could allow so valuable a tract to lie useless.

“Oh,” said he, “I’ll explain that to you. Some

few years ago a stipendiary magistrate was sent down here by government, and he came to reside in that large house, and wanting grass for his cattle he applied to the landlord\* to let him have this field at any rent he might please to demand. Now the landlord, not agreeing in politics with said magistrate, and moreover feeling persuaded that such a functionary had no business in the Mullet, instead of complying with his request, on the following day sent down all the ploughs he could command, and before long turned up the grass field, and there it has remained, just as you now see it, ever since."

Though urged by my friend to proceed further and see the improvements at Bingham Castle, as it was Sunday, I declared I was content to see it at a distance of about two miles, where, upon a large and apparently a green fertile lawn, it presented a long front, ornamented with turrets and crenellated, so as to give it a half-military appearance. Now, though there was not a tree to be seen, and though the peninsula of the Mullet, take it altogether, is as ugly a piece of Irish land as I have yet visited, yet, at the distance from whence I viewed it, backed as it was by the mountains of Achill and by the fine range of the Corraan and Maam Thomas groups, while, through a gap in the latter Croagh Patrick could be seen rising in its beautiful conical altitude, this castle looked well

\* It is not necessary here to state who the landlord is: it is to be understood that there are more landowners than one in the Mullet, and there may be many and just reasons too, why at certain times a man may do what he likes with his own.

from the point where I now observed it, and seemed to have been thus located by a man capable of knowing where a mansion house should be erected.

The following day an excursion was arranged for me in which I was much interested. I was to walk across the peninsula to the glebe house of the Protestant clergyman, and he, providing a boat, we were to proceed from a little bay called French port and reach the island of Innisgloria, where I was informed that there were some very curious old buildings and remains, that were full of interest to the antiquarian. The morning was fine, and it would have been well for me in pursuance of my views, if I had taken advantage of that morning; but, unfortunately, I did not do so, nor leave Belmullet until near noon. As I proceeded on my walk of about five miles, the day began to change, the sky began to look muddy in the south western quarter, the wind to rise, and, when I arrived at the glebe house, I received the agreeable information that it would be out of the question at that time of day and the present state of the wind, to reach Innisgloria and return before night. This walk across the Mullet was certainly not very interesting; except here and there a small patch of corn and potatoes won from the moor, all else was either bog or sand-hill; and certainly, the former, though ugly enough, was not so unpleasant as the dreary waste of sand which bespoke the march of desolation and barrenness every day on the advance. It is said that about a century ago, one Gamble, a tenant of Sir Arthur Shaen, introduced

rabbits into the Mullet from Westmeath. No doubt he thought he was doing a great good. Time has shown he was a great evil-doer.

Approaching the western coast, our way lay through one of the largest villages ; like all the rest it was an irregular congeries of huts, but they, standing as they did high and dry, did not exhibit so much damp discomfort as the bog cabins. One or two dwellings were of a better sort, and one was shown as the habitation of the Queen of Erris ; or, in other words, a Miss M'Donnell, who, having some education, some property, and much good sense, has been dubbed by Priest Lyons (as a Hildebrand crowned an emperor,) her Majesty of the Mullet. I certainly had a desire to enter into the presence of this western Victoria—but the honour was denied me, inasmuch as she was making a royal progress amongst her lieges in the mountains. I, as a sort of set off against this disappointment, was brought into the house of an Erris squireen—one who once was a considerable landholder, but, from profuse hospitality and other causes, is now reduced nearly to the level of a common peasant, and who lived principally on the goodwill of his neighbours. Mr. Michael Anthony O'Donnell (which fine double Christian name is abbreviated into Mister Mickletony,) was not in the house, but he was not far off, and would be sent for. His house, or rather cabin, though not larger than the others around, was clean and water-tight—the floor was swept—there was an air of tidiness and decency around. I observed a book or two on a shelf, and one appeared to be a New



Testament. As this man was decidedly a character, and had much to tell of old lore and legend, a message was left for him, requesting he would follow us, and we proceeded to the glebe house. And such a position for a glebe house, within three hundred yards of the Atlantic Ocean—nothing between the sea cliffs and the rear of the house but a dreary down, on which a blade of grass dare not start up lest it should be cut off by the driving blast fraught with salt spray, and where only the sea pink and the bent had the means and power dwarfishly to vegetate. What a wide difference between this Erris glebe, and one of the sheltered, garden environed, placid, picturesque glebes in wealthy England, the very emblem of old long established comfort, and this horrid house, with its interior walls all green with the mildew of indomitable damp—its windows shattered with the last winter's blast, and for panes of glass, boards, canvass, and all manner of ugly make-shifts substituted. I wonder how an Oxford or Cambridge Fellow would like to be sent here, as the settled retreat of his latter days. Why, the very sight of it would give him a quartan ague. But not so our Irish parson. The worthy divine was out amongst his workmen, trying to make a little hay, not while the sun shone—for the orb was not visible—but while the wind blew, without carrying wet on its wings. I have seldom seen a healthier looking young man, and his appearance convinced me that this land of storm and sea damp is not inimical to the human constitution : he looked as healthy and as happy as if he were the incumbent of a golden



prebend. His reverence convinced me that I had lost my opportunity of visiting Innisgloria, but he was kind enough for a short time to accompany me in a walk along the cliffs at the rear of his dwelling. He also showed me what he considered curious though I had witnessed the same often before, namely, the luxuriant growth in his garden, which was only sheltered off from the adjoining downs by a low wall, (but that low wall was every thing,) of some very fine hydrangias and carnations. Indeed, I don't think I ever saw anywhere such vigorous specimens of these flowers.

- The walk along the cliffs between French port and Scotch port, two narrow inlets, was interesting enough; the cliffs, though not high, were very perpendicular, and here and there a portion distinct from the rest formed either a peninsula or island, (and some of these islands have the traces of ancient buildings, &c. &c.): or where the softer rock or the disturbing trap dyke gave the sea opportunity to force its way, there a cave was formed, in which the waves were growling and the stones rolling, making the wild music of the coast. And here was shown me where adown the perpendicular cliff a venturous man went with perfect safety to recover a sheep that had fallen from above; and not far off, and about one hundred yards inland from the face of the precipice is what is called in Irish a Poulnashanthana; that is, a cave that has worn its way far in, and has widened as it advanced; and the roof has near its inland extremity fallen in, and there is a deep chasm,

at the bottom of which the green translucent waves are growling, and the sea weeds are covering the rocks below with their manifold vegetations, and above, the lichens and iron tinged waters as they trickle down the sides, tint them with various and finely contrasted colours.

## CHAPTER IV.

A further acquaintance with a Squireen—His picture—A look out on the Atlantic—Innisgloria—An unfeminine tradition—A Priest's liberality—Suspected by one of his own flock—Women and vermin equally excommunicated by St. Brenan—No religious Rats can live in Innisgloria—I advise certain dignitaries who are not as poor as Church mice not to shun the island there—Cliff fortifications—The Curse of Cromwell—The Priest's leap—The miracle—An important fortification of great antiquity—Singular defences—The Tuatha Danaans—A man enticed by a Fairy—The adventure and its result—The Parson's daughter—Her amour—Her sojourn with "the gentry"—The work of an Achill Priest—The condition of her conversion, her marriage, disenchantment, and death—The Enchanted country—The submersion of the land—A curious burying ground—A Story of the Irish wars—A faithful follower—The desecration of an holy place—The awful fate of the perpetrators.

I CONFESS that when the parson wished me good morning, and his place was supplied by Mr. Mickle Tony O'Donnell, I was not sorry for the exchange, for, without desiring to disparage his reverence, either as a clergyman or a gentleman, I must say that I, for "the nonce," preferred the garrulous and credulous Milesian to the matter of fact minister. What a perverted taste! Now, I was prepared by the young friends who accompanied me from Belmullet, for what I was to expect in Mr. Mickletony, and he did not do discredit to his character. The man is tall, thin, and rather narrow shouldered. He stoops a little, I should suppose from frequent bendings of his body as he enters the cabin doors of his many friends: he has a little shuffle in his gait, arising, I should suspect, from the over use of whiskey—the commence-

ment of what *may* end in delirium tremens. He has a round face, a keen black eye, and, if all be true that is said of his drinking propensities and practices, he shows a constitution that has hitherto well withstood the poison of a continual stimulus. Mr. O'Donnell's accost has the ease and confidence of one who felt he was of the better sort, and he entered at once into free and familiar conversation. Where we stood there lay before us the great ocean, which was heaving under a wind that was sending from the south-west heavy clouds that portended a speedy fall of rain, and along the wild cliff-embattled coast, the waves were boiling and surging and sending up their spray on high, with moanings amongst the caverns, that foretold the coming storm. To the north was Eagle island, lofty and abrupt, with two picturesque lighthouses, which were just being erected. Southwards Innisgloria, and farther down towards Achill, Inniskea. I desired to gather what I could from Mickletony about Innisgloria, and accordingly asked was *he* ever there?

"Yes, to be sure I was. Do you think I would not often be where all the people of any gentility do be buried?"

I asked him if it was true that the bodies buried there did not corrupt? He said he did not believe it was true, for he saw bones thrown up as loose and rotten when a grave was opened as anywhere else; "but, be that true or not, this I can say, there is a well dedicated to St. Brenain, the water of which, if any woman dare to drink, while in her mouth would turn blood-red, and be full of little red worms: they would do her great mischief for a year and a day."



On this assertion of O'Donnell's, one of my young companions, a relative of Captain Nugent, exclaimed,

"Oh, that's all nonsense! there's not a word of truth in it; for, not long ago, the captain, his wife, and one or two other ladies, accompanied by Dean Lyon's went on a pleasure-party to the island; and, though they were all aware of the superstition just alluded to, yet, as the well was a fine one, full of clear cold water, the day sultry, and a drink most desirable, not only the gentlemen but the ladies drank plentifully of the living spring, which became, not certainly wormy, on the occasion, though it might have become a little red, from the infusion of port wine thrown in to qualify it for the stomach. And here the good sense of the worthy Roman Catholic clergyman could not stand out against such proofs of the well not being inimical to womankind; for, as no ill consequence followed from the promiscuous drinking, he declared that on the next convenient opportunity, he would bring his sister to the island, and make her take a drink out of the well, in order to disabuse his parishioners of this absurd old prejudice."

"Well, gentlemen, let me ask you," says O'Donnell, "has the priest been as yet as good as his word? I'll take a bet with any of you, that he will take care to forget that he ever promised any such thing. But be this as it may, believe you me, that no rat will live in that holy island; and, what's more, if any of its earth is brought into a house where rats or mice do be, not a *tail* or tidings of one of the varmints will you ever hear of afterwards; and there are curious places in that same island, caves underground, built, they say, by the old magicians, who

kept the country in ancient days, and into one of which, if two persons go down together, and if, when they get there, they don't break a piece of bread, both holding it with their right hands, and then eat of it, one of them will certainly die before a year and a day are over. But come, sir, as you have travelled so far to see our wild country, I must show you its curiosities. Here are plenty of old fortifications; we are now very near one."

So we proceeded towards the cliff southwestward from the glebe-house, and O'Donnell pointed out what certainly required some accurate inspection to prove to have been a fortification: a wall about three feet high ran across a promontory from sea to sea. There are very indistinct traces of a gate, and some side lodges; however, within this inclosure there seems to have been extensive underground places for concealment. They were now choked up. Mr. Dawson and others made some attempts not long ago to open them, but it would seem that they did not persevere, so as to arrive at any satisfactory information respecting them. As far as I could observe, they did not seem similar to those artificial caves that are to be found over Ireland in our raths. The country people call the place Porth; Mr. O'Donnell could not tell me whether it was an English or an Irish word.

Scotch Port is the name of an inlet not far off. The last tenant of this strong place, according to Mr. Muckletony, was one Shawn Gill, a desperate tyrant of course; whose cruelties the people could bear no longer, so they surprised him one night and cast him into the boiling ocean.

Proceeding further north, and just in the rear of

the glebe house, is another fortification erected on a little promontory, lower than the rest of the cliff—which seems as if it had sunk down, and which is with great difficulty accessible: a ditch or mound runs all round this, and there are traces of stone buildings and stone walls defending the mound; the place is called “Doon a Derrig,” or “the fort of the red man,” and there was pointed out to me a little square apartment in which the said red man, an outlaw of more modern times, had fixed his abode, and to which he had some means of access, where no one else would dare to venture. Farther northward again, is another insulated rock, whose face is so conformable in stratification with the adjoining cliff, that if joined they would make an exact fit. The same convulsion that broke down Slieve Crohan in Achill, that severed Dunbrista, and has left evidences all along this western coast of the submersion of forest and field\*—must have caused the separation now before me. But there is, in the opinion of the people, a better and more satisfactory account of the separation of this now inaccessible island cliff, which account has given rise to its name—the Priest's Leap.

When the curse of Cromwell, sweeping all Ireland, did not even spare this remote district, and his black-mouthed troopers, greedy of gain and prodigal of blood, broke the mountain barrier of “Irris Bounds,” and made their appearance in the Mullet, a priest was celebrating mass at the abbey of Termon Carra, when

\* Though not a tree dare *now* shew its top above the shelter of a stone wall in the Mullet, there are abundant remains of timber in its bogs, and under strands now covered by the tide.

a panting messenger ran in and told him to escape, for the heretics were at hand. So the holy father thrusting the pix and chalice into his bosom, and clad in his flowing vestments, flees towards the cliff, hoping to reach some cave or sheltering rock beneath which he might secrete himself for a time. But his pursuers are hot foot after him—their victim is in sight, and now he has reached the nearest cliff, and down it goes perpendicular to the blue ocean; and behind are rushing the dismounted troopers, the iron scabbards of their swords rattling amongst the rocks as they came on: he has but a choice of deaths, and he will fall into the hands of Providence rather than of men; and in an instant he will make the spring from the precipice.—Ay, down he goes; but if he does, down goes the cliff along with him—it falls under him slanting, and he is safe on an instantaneous island—which not only stands separate from the mainland, keeping the surging sea between him and his foes, but protected from their murderous shots by its slanting position and its sheltering rocks. It is to be assumed that when the Sassenachs retreated, disappointed as they were of their prey, some friendly Corragh came and took him off from this rock, on which nothing but a puffin or a sea mew could remain for any time without perishing.

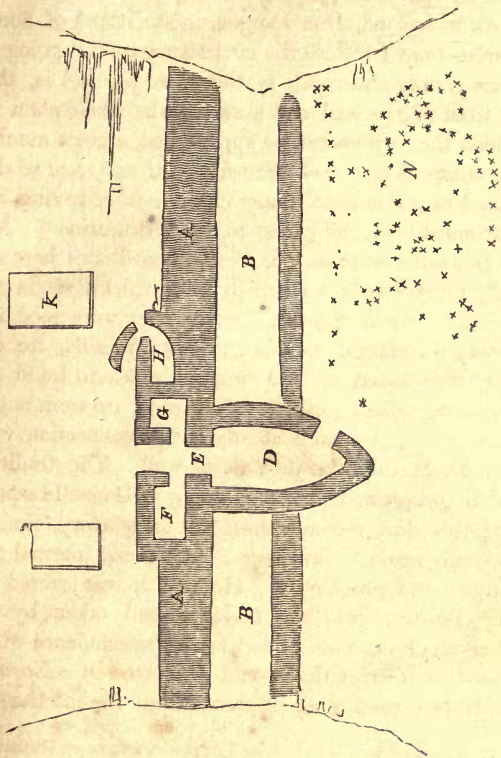
Farther northwards is another fortified island, or rather promontory, called Doon a Neana, or “the Fort of the One Man.” I have heard nothing concerning *this*. So proceeding northwards under the guidance of Mr. O'Donnell, we passed the little inlet or harbour of Scotch Port, on whose rough beach

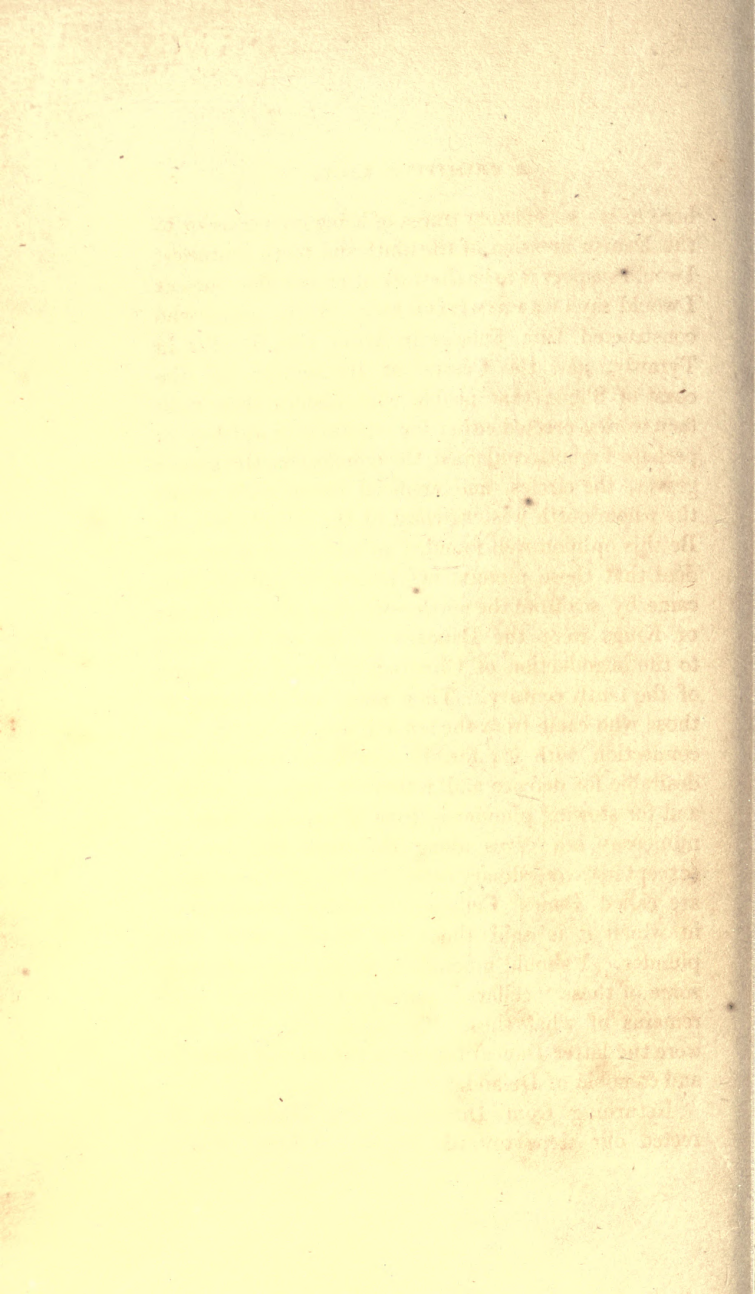


some few boats and corraghs were lying high and dry, and again ascended the cliffs, which became, as we advanced northwards, bolder and loftier ; and, when at the highest elevation, a promontory pushed out its sharp shoulder seawards, forming a fine headland, and connected but by a narrow isthmus with the adjacent downs. Here, as a more important position, there were much more important fortifications, and a wall about ten feet high, but evidently the ruin of a much loftier erection, ran across from cliff to cliff ; protected outside by a *fosse* cut in the rock, and, in the centre, there was the gateway, protected by outworks containing caserns and covered ways of a singular and elaborate construction. This wall and the ruin bore marks of remote antiquity, their stones large and cyclopean in their construction, were mantled over with the long grey lichens that seem to be the peculiar vesture of buildings belonging to the one ancient race. Indeed, I did not at all expect from the other places I had visited, to find any thing so very interesting as the spot I was now admiring. It is called Dunamoa. The fosse, the wall, the singularly curious outworks, the interior lodges, which, though now unroofed, still gave evident proof that they were apartments covered in an exactly similar way to those in Innisgloria and Innismurry. The promontory indeed, besides these strong defences, bore traces of being fenced all round, like that of Downpatrick, with an earthen mound. Near the seaward front of the promontory and inclining to the south, there are the foundations of a square building of some size, but this was so dilapidated by man and the elements, that its

exact form I could not trace ; but the most curious circumstance of all, and which marks its importance and antiquity, identifying it with the oldest military work in Ireland, Dun Eangus, in the island of South Arran, (and I believe the circumstance I am going to state is only observable in those two places,) is, that in front of the wall and besetting the whole plain by which the fortress can be approached, a great number of sharp flaggy rocks are fixed on end, and so disposed as not only to hinder chariots from driving, but horsemen from riding, up to the fortification.\* Mr. O'Donnell said that "he remembers stones here not only much larger, but much more thickly set in the ground than at present, but as they were good and *handy* for making quoins and window sills, &c. &c. they were taken up and brought down to build the adjoining village ;" those still upright are from one to three feet high, and evidently have a connection with and are of the same date as the wall. The tradition of the people as reported to me by O'Donnell respecting this dun, was any thing but satisfactory, sinning not only against chronology, but against internal testimony and probability. He said it was erected by the Burkes, and was besieged and taken by the Danes. Now, besides having no resemblance whatever to a fortress that would be erected by a Norman de Burgo, coming as he would from the interior—it

\* Annexed is a hasty sketch of the defences of Dunamoa. A, the wall ; B, the fosse ; D, the defences of the gate ; FGH, the lodges in the thickness of the wall ; K, the ruins of interior buildings ; N, the sharp stones besetting the ground in front of the fortification ; the perpendicular cliffs are on either side of the isthmus.







bore to me satisfactory traces of being even anterior to the Danish invasion of the ninth and tenth centuries. I would suspect it to be the work of a much more ancient I would say of a PRIMITIVE race ; of that people who constructed Dun Eangus in Arran, Dun Bristha in Tyrawly, and the Cassiol of Innismurry, off the coast of Sligo ; that people who, besides those military works, erected either for sepulture or worship, or perhaps for both conjoined, the cromleachs, the giant's graves, the circles, and artificial caves, with which the whole north western coast of the island abounds. Be this opinion well founded or not, it is quite evident that these monuments belong to a people that came by sea from the north—whether these Vickyngr or Kings were the Danaans of an era long prior to the introduction of Christianity, or of the Danes of the tenth century. They must have belonged to those who came from the sea and desired to remain in connection with it ; for, besides these fortresses so desirable for defence and retreat in time of disaster, and for stowing plunder in time of success, there are numerous sea caves along the coast that are dry (except in extraordinary cases,) in the interior ;—these are called Danes' Cellars—"Cellairna Lochlain"—in which it is said those sea rovers stowed their plunder. I should much like to explore accurately some of these "cellars," perhaps I would find some remains of what these "paganiee kings" (if they were the latter Danes) tore from the ancient churches and cœnobias of Ireland.

Returning from Dunamoa, Mr. Mickletony directed our steps towards an ancient burial-ground,

called Termon\* Carra, which, as I take it, means the quarter of the bishop's townland—which, indeed, it is, being part of the estate of the See of Killala, standing, as the old cemetery did, on the verge of the sand-hills. I was desirous of examining some old graves, and some remains of ancient crosses, which, I was told, were to be found there; and it being hinted to me that our Milesian companion was well acquainted with the fairy superstition of the country, and had allowed that he, himself, had actually been with the fairies; as we went along, I took occasion to lead, as it were, unintentionally to the subject, and was not a little surprised and satisfied at finding that I had at length come across a man, and that of the better sort, who had seen the "good people;" and so here I had before me one who was neither ashamed nor afraid to allow his acquaintance with "the gentry," who said he had not only seen and heard, but had felt them; and though they were, it is true, rather scarce in these degenerate days, yet they were still in the neighbourhood. And now it was the point to get our friend to particularize, and leaving loose generalities to narrate some of his haps in the land of "Faerie." So not in the slightest manner appearing to doubt his veracity, or to throw ridicule, or any discredit on the existence of the "good people," I requested O'Donnell to give me his experience, which, with great assumption of veracity, and keeping a most solemn countenance, he proceeded to do as follows:—

\* These ecclesiastical lands were marked off in ancient times by crosses, set up as termini—hence termon lands

“One evening, about seven years ago, I had been supping with an old friend at —, and quiet and sober enough we were. I could take my davy (affidavit) that I had not drunk more than four tumblers of punch, and the moon rising, I said it was time to go home, and so I started, but had not gone far, when a cloud coming thick from the west, shut out the light of the moon, and I had to grope my way down the Boreen and over a Togher, which I knew if I left one inch, I’d go down nobody knows how far, and I might be choked before I could say a *pater-noster*. So do you see, I was picking my path along as if I was treading upon eggs, when what should I see stand up under my nose, but a manikin, with a little body, and a long face, with eyes as green as a goat, and a nose long, black, and crooked, like a carman’s grease horn, and my little fellow had a coal o’ turf in a clip stick in his hand, which he every now and then blew upon, and brought up a blaze that gave a light, which showed well enough the way we were going on. ‘Why then, my dacent gossoon,’ says myself, it’s well we’re met at any rate, wherever you’re going, or wherever you’re coming from; maybe you’d keep blowing your sod, avic, a little longer, untill I get off this place, that’s so soft entirely, and get on the hard road, that ’ll lead me to my own house in Court Clough.’ ‘Why then it’s myself that ’ll do that and welcome.’ And so on he goes before me, and me after him—but not one o’ me, though I’m smart enough at all times on my pins, could keep up with the little fellow at all, for he neither seemed to walk, or run, or hop, or leap, but on he went as smooth as

a shadow on the water, or as a cloud in the sky. ‘Och then,’ says myself to the little fellow, ‘be asy, ma bouchal; if you’re strong, be marciful, and don’t kill me all out in keeping after you so’—with that he seemed to move slower, and we got upon what I thought was dry ground, and on we went, and myself, in the mean time, thought to be chatty with the little chap, but divil a word he’d say, but every now and then he’d give his coal a puff, and ‘pon my conscience, sometimes I thought I saw out on the edge of the darkness, little quare faces that kept grinning at me, and amongst the rest I thought one put out his tongue, and said, ‘A nate way it is you’re going home, Mr. O’Donnell.’ Well, thinks I to myself, I’m not far off from my own house at any rate, for sure I hear the sea roaring to the right on the shore beyond, under that star that’s now peeping out from the black cloud, and don’t I see too the hill that our village is under? ‘Maybe now,’ says myself to the little fellow, (for to tell Heaven’s truth and shame the divel, I began to desire his room as much as his company,) ‘it’s time for you to be going about your own business, whatever it is—you may safely leave me where I am, for I know my way now, the road is straight and hard, and I’ll be at my own door in Court Clough in less than no time.’ ‘Oh, by no manner o’ manes,’ says the little man, mighty civil, ‘it’ll go hard with me if I don’t see you home.’ So on we went farther and farther until myself got tired, and I saw the sand hills all around. ‘Where are you bringing me, little boy?’ says myself; ‘sure we’re getting amongst the holes and hollows where nothing can be safe, not even



a rabbit.' 'Oh, be asy,' says the little fellow, 'I tell you for once we're in the right way'—'Well, any how, right or wrong, I'm all out tired, and to comfort my heart, and as the coal is at hand, I'll, in in God's name, just light my dudeen, seeing as how I've a cut o' tobacco in my pocket'—so with that I came near my companion to catch a hold o' the coal, when he sets up a shriek that sounded through the hills like the cry of a curlew, and off he went like a blast o' wind, coal and all, and there was myself in the middle o' the yellow hills without knowing on what side to turn, 'or what to do; so I sat down, said a pater and an ave, cut the sign o' the cross between me and harm, and fell fast asleep, and there I lay till the morning sun arose to tell me how far I was from home, and show me that it was God's mercy that the wind did not rise in the night, for if it did, I'd have been buried alive where I lay by the flying sand, and certain I am that it was the wicked intin-tion o' that phouca to bring me to harm, and leave me there."

"Well now, Mr. O'Donnell, perhaps all this was but imagination; possibly your head was light, and you were led astray by the spirit of poteen rather than by the phantom of a sheeoge."

"Oh by no manner o' mænes; how could I be any thing but sinsible and sober, when I was trusting to four tumblers o' punch? But maybe you don't believe what happened to myself; if so how will you believe what I know fell out to another?"

"Oh, Mr. O'Donnell, I assure you I do not desire to throw discredit upon any assertion of yours, and I

hope you will tell me whatever more you may know concerning the 'good people.'"

This reliance on his veracity opened him, and he said, "why shouldn't the sheeoges mislead me, when they brought to a bad end the parson's daughter?"

"How was that?" says I.

"Why, it was in this way, I remimber the matter well—it was the talk of all the neighbours when I was a little boy; at that time there lived in the glebe-house beyond, a parson o' the name o' M——, and he had as pretty and clane a slip of a girl for a daughter as any in Erris—her eye was as dark as a blackberry, and her skin as white as the feathers under a gull's wing. The squire's sons were all a courting her; and my own father, I could hear, liked her better than the one he took afterwards to wife, meaning my own mother. But none o' the neighbours, sir, would she look upon at all kindly, and she was proud and stately, and wary as a wild swan, for they say she had fixed her love upon the skipper of a French lugger, that used to anchor in Blacksod Bay, and often land and go up to the glebe, for they say too, that the minister used to have dealings with the Frenchman, and plenty o' brandy, claret, and fine silks and laces were stowed away in a cave under the parson's parlour. So you see two kinds of exchanges were going on, and Monsieur had his own dealings with the father and the daughter; and some time after this the lugger left the coast, Mounseer was no more heard of, and it was a melancholy time for poor Ellen M——.

"About this time people began to say that she used

to be out at night, and keep company with the 'good people,' and it wasn't for one night only, but for weeks and months she'd stay away, and every time she came back the more silent, sad, and useless she was—her colour went, her flesh wasted—nothing but the wild movements of her large eyes, which, though formerly black, were now, as it were, red as a coal, full, as one might say, of fairy fire.

"In this state her father, who loved her fondly, did not know what to do; the neighbours told him that it all came of her being with the good people, and that nothing would take her from their power, if it wasn't a holy priest that lived in Achill, and who could do wonders with those that were fairy-struck; with that, and losing no time, parson M—— sends for friar Cook, who made no objection in life, but came in the minister's wherry, and the only bargain he made, when consenting to relieve Miss Ellen from the fairies was, that she should never darken a church door again; that being settled, to work he went. It is not so easy to take back a body from the fairies, and one too that staid a month with them, and of course must have *ate* of their victuals, and being a Protestant moreover, she didn't know well how to cut the sign o' the cross. But still Father Cook didn't give over, and at length having her in hand for more than half a year, during all which time he had free quarters with the minister, and if they didn't pray, maybe they did *ate* and drink together,—but at the end o' that time, Miss Ellen became quite well; her spirits, her flesh, and her good looks returned; she behaved herself like a *razonable* creathure; and not

long after the priest went away, one Teeling came, and made his proposals for her. He was a Protestant from Sligo, had much substance in land and stock, and as the father was anxious, and the girl seemingly not unwilling, the match was made, they were married, but indeed they didn't live long happily together. Teeling was a drunken baste; he was flaming hot in his religion, and would have his wife go his way. Now she had sworn to Father Cook she'd never darken a church door, and what could she do—break her oath she wouldn't, and more especially as she had taken to the ould religion. So once Teeling, in his liquor, began to abuse her, and in his passion he chanced to catch hold of a gospel which Father Cook, when going away, had tied round her neck, and now Teeling pulled so hard, seeing that Ellen endeavoured to resist, that the string broke, the gospel fell to the ground, and that instant down dropped poor Ellen M—— as dead as a herring. Such are the consequences of having to do with the good people."

"Well, but, Mr. O'Donnell, sure it cannot be true that this parson M—— was a smuggler, as what you have just said seems to infer."

"Indeed he was, sir, and many more parsons that succeeded him; and to this day there is a cave down under the parlour in which they used to stow goods."

"And were they, in other respects, proper and well-conducted men?"

"Oh, as to that it's not for me to speak, but this I must say, that neither priests nor parsons were as care-



rul about themselves as they are now. M—— was, as I hear, amighty asy and peaceable man—he never took, to be sure, much trouble about his parish; and when his wife and his daughter died, he was lonesome, and by consequence took up with a woman, by whom he had two children. Well, 'twas one Scarlet that came after him, and he, as I said before, was a smuggler, too; I believe he knew more o' that business, than o' preaching, for I could hear a joke about him, that once, when he was at college, his examiner finding he couldn't answer a word, asked him his name, 'Scarlet, sir,' says he. 'That's a wonder entirely,' says the doctor, 'for it's asy seen you're not deep red.' ”

Having heard so much, while in Achill, of the enchanted land, that is occasionally visible, as rising out of the Atlantic, I asked Mr. Mickletony if he ever saw it.

“ Yes, sir, often. I saw upon a clear day, reaching along from the Saddle of Achill, and covering all you now see before you as the dark and boiling sea, a delightful green land, with illigant hills and valleys, woods, rivers, and pretty bays. One day I saw the houses, and some o' the people plainly—one woman especially, I saw come out o' the back door of her house, walk into her garden, and cut cabbage for her dinner.”

Upon my smiling at this particularity, he immediately added,—

“ Do you doubt, sir, what I say? I know twenty people from my own village who will swear they saw the same. Why, sir, I know one Barrett, who is yet living, that went out in his boat carrying a coal of

fire along with him, knowing, as we do, that if he could but cast a bit of fire on it it would be for ever after disenchanted ; and so he followed the island for forty days, it retreating as he rowed on, and ever and always just keeping out of reach of his arm, and I believe he'd have followed it still longer, had not his coal gone out."

Upon my remarking that the enchanted island which he saw might be part of the land which by some great convulsion was torn off from the rest of Ireland and now lies sunken.

" I believe, sir, what you say is right ; for besides often hearing of a rock far out seaward, beyond the island of Inniskea, which rises every seven years out o' the sea, and is covered with church buildings, and has a belfry and a tower, and is therefore called Monaster Lettera—don't I myself know that there are bogs and bog timber down below the sands, and under where the sea always flows—there was a ship stranded not long ago on the sandy beach off Terran point ; in order to raise her, or at any rate to save her timbers, the people dug all around her during the ebb of a spring tide, and cutting as they did down through the sand, and where the sea came in on them so that their labour was vain, yet still at the bottom they found nothing but bog and large pieces of bog fir."

" That may be very true," says an intelligent coast-guard, who was just now in our company, " for I have often seen in Blacksod Bay of a clear day, when the sea was smooth and as transparent as spring water, fathoms down, the roots of trees that seemed of the same sort as what are every day dug out of our bogs."

Having satisfied myself that I had seen all that was worth observing along the shore within the compass of a few hours' walk, it became a natural desire towards the decline of the day to turn my face in the direction of the hospitable house of the Rev. Mr. Stock, the incumbent of Kilcoleman parish, where I was invited to dine, and in order to reach it and save a round of four miles, it was necessary to hasten to pass across a strand that only was dry at ebb tide. I had more than one motive to gain the pass ; first, the desire to be saved a walk of four miles, and let me tell you, gentlemen readers, that it is no unpleasant saving at the end of a day's ramble ; then I would go by a curious burying ground called Termon Carra ; and, moreover, amongst the sand hills on the other side of the estuary I would see some very ancient places of sepulture, where bodies are deposited in stone cysts, and which lately, in consequence of the blowing of the sand, had been exposed to view. It was a pleasure to me that my communicative companion, Mr. Mickletony, still accompanied me. I was desirous to ascertain from him what families were the most ancient in the district, and especially whether his own, the O'Donnells, was of long establishment. " Sir," replied he, " I am no great scholar, and my memory isn't safe regarding these matters ; but this I often heard from one that knew a great deal about my people, that we came originally from the north, and that we can count sixteen generations since we came here ; and isn't that long enough to prove that we're of an ould stock : but I'll tell you what I heard my father say, that in the time o' Cromwell

there was a troop commanded by one Coote came into this quarter, and they racked, ruined, and cut down all the poor Catholic people. My ancestor was at that time rich and prosperous, and he knew that if he staid he would find no mercy. So he gathered all his money, put it in a crock, and in the presence of a foster-sister, who was his maid, he buried it under his kitchen hearth, and then he departed into Donegal, leaving the girl in care of his home; and by-and-by the troopers came, and they having got the hard word that the man was rich and that he couldn't have carried all away with him, commanded the woman to tell where the money was. Of course she denied all knowledge, and then they had her lashed with their bridles, and yet she wouldn't tell; and then they half hanged her, and cutting her down pressed her to disclose, and still she said nothing; and then they spread out the coals of fire on the very hearth under which was the gold, and placed her sitting on the burning embers; and what did she do then—why in the middle of her great pain she bit off her tongue and spit it in their faces; and then they set fire to the house, and left the poor colleen to wander tongueless about the world: and so it was until the curse of Cromwell was removed and better times came on, and Catholics could live at home, and my ancestor returned to find his gold safe and his poor fosterer a dumb wanderer, going from house to house."

By this time we had reached a burying ground which stands on the edge of the sand hills, and which is in danger of being shortly overwhelmed by the encroachment of this great evil of the western coast.



Here are the remains of an ancient church : this is the Tarmon Carra alluded to in the *Monasticon Hibernicum*, and was the retreat of one or more monastics. It must, in its best state, have been a small place, for vestiges of the wall still remain, and Mr. Mickletony showed me an upright stone, evidently the remains of an ancient cross, and in the upper part of which were two holes.

“ Here, sir,” says he, “ the holy saint, Colman, used to creep on his bended knees and say the whole psalter of David from beginning to end, and when he got so tired that he couldn’t keep erect upon his two knees, because of the pains in his back—do you see these two holes—here he used to put his two thumbs, and supporting himself with them he’d get through his duty. Well, do you know what happened to this very stone not long ago ? three fellows of the coast guard, having one evening been drinking in Bingham’s-town until they got wild mad, were passing by the place, when what should the devil tempt them to do but to come and throw down this holy stone ; and that wasn’t all. I’d be ashamed to tell you, sir, what more they did to defile the place where a man of God left his mark. Well, not long after the great archbishop M’Hale came into the Mullet about a matter concerning dean Lyons—but that’s neither here nor there ; but what I should say is, that his grace heard of what the Protestant coast guard did, and in his anger, for his soul was stirred, he pronounced that before a year and a day should pass over the fellows’ heads from the time they did the sacrilege, every one of them would come to such an end, that all would say, ‘ This

is God's vengeance.' And so it was. One of them, in the height of his health and strength, was taken with a great and inward pain, and died in an hour. Another was out at sea, and asleep during a calm night on the deck of a cutter; suddenly he started up, sprung overboard, and never rose again. The third was crossing, along with another coast-guard on horseback, a shallow arm of the sea when the tide was in, and as they both were on the one horse, and the water up to his belly, and the beast was beginning to plunge and swim; while the foremost was doing his best to manage the horse, the other fellow fell off behind, and his comrade never missed him until he got to land. His corpse went out to sea, and he was never heard of afterwards. Thus the three sacrilegious fellows came to their bad end, and thus was the saying of our great archbishop verified."\*

\* Upon inquiry from others, I find that this most unbecoming act was committed, and that the perpetrators actually met their deaths in a sudden and appalling way before the termination of a year, but *not* by the invocation of Dr. M'Hale.

## CHAPTER V.

An unpleasant pass—A Christian pony—Long legs at a discount—Huge Sandhills—Improvement at the wrong end—A case of an animal overleaping instinct, and with what may be called rationality adapting itself to circumstances—An Ancient Battle monument—The place of rest of a restless Munster Man—I wish all trouble-the-worlds even from the remotest parts of Kerry were as quiet under a Sandhill—Evidence of the increasing inroads of the Sea on the Coast—A dark superstition—A way to get married—Maids charming, though not fair—Trappists scared away—Holy skins should not be made the Devil's ginns—Ancient Sepulchres—Bones half burned like those found under Cromleachs—Phenomena of Electricity—The Stone of the Hag—The Legend of the enchanted Swans of Innisgloria—Their penance, their Piety, and their happy death—Description of Innisgloria—The approach to it—Curious remains—Image of St. Brenain or rather St. Brendan—The Irish the first discoverers of America—Innisgloria in the vicinity of the Enchanted Land—Monaster Lettera—Island of Inniskea—Its Knaveen, when and wherefore he gets a new garment—Nothing for nothing in this world—The Knaveen and the Pirate—A broken Saint almost as bad as a Bankrupt Banker—He fails for want of credit.

LEAVING the old cemetery, we came to a strand which is dry and passable when the tide is out, but which was, when we arrived, covered with water for nearly a quarter of a mile, and the sea stream rushing in with the force of a rapid river. Talking to Mr. Mickletony and lingering along, we had missed our time ; and now the alternative was before us of taking backwards a round of four or five miles, or somehow getting across this water. Boat there was none ; horse not to be procured ; and the question was, " shall we go round or wade ? " In this difficulty, a strong low-set young fellow, who was digging potatoes in an adjoining field, came up and offered, without attempt-

ing to ask any payment, to carry us all over—there were three of us. His offer was too acceptable to be refused. So, consider me, reader, mounted on what we used to call at school “a Christian pony,” and I astride on Paddy’s broad shoulders, with my long legs protruded at right angles to his breast—somewhat in the way an elephant carries his tusks. Now the man is up to the middle, the stream is strong, and Paddy, top-heavy as he is, totters; and it is now for it tide, and now for it, Paddy; the water kelpie looks on, we may suppose, in suspense, and I tremble and quake, and yet we have not got to the centre of the stream—a *nice* place this for a female tourist, Mrs. Hall or Lady Chatterton; and now the tide is rising to the sturdy fellow’s breast, and spite of all my caution, my heels are dragging along the water; one false step of Paddy’s, and I am a soused tourist.

“Courage, master alanna,” cries my Erris boy; “we’ll give a little to the current, and go down the stream; up with your heels, now; don’t give the running sea a purchase against me: so, master honey; steady now; that’ll do, the water’s shallower. Och, but your legs, God bless them, are long and heavy.

In this way, encouraging himself and me, he bore on gallantly, and we reached the further shore, I only with wet feet; and every body says, what I know to my cost is not true, that sea water don’t give cold. In this way this fine fellow carried my two friends also across, but not with such difficulty, as they were neither so long nor so heavy. Never was a shilling given more readily, or received more thankfully than

on this occasion by a man who I really believe expected no more than thanks for a labour of civility, which very few would have had strength enough, combined with activity, to perform.

Besides the object of making a short cut to where I was to dine, I also desired to cross this sea stream in order to inspect the ancient graves, which I was told lay uncovered in the midst of the sand hills that stretched out before us. We therefore plunged into this waste in search of these remains. And here, certainly, was a desert of great extent, of unmitigated desolation, and at the same time, of a very picturesque aspect. I have seen sand hills on different shores; and those who have been at Malahide, nine miles north of Dublin, may, if they cross the harbour, get amongst hills and hollows, that may give a good idea of such scenery, but inasmuch as the Atlantic Ocean is greater than the Irish Channel, as the western cliffs are more lofty than those of Howth or Lambay, so are the sand hills here of greater size and extent, their elevations much loftier, their hollows deeper and more abrupt; and all is so changeful, what to-day is a hill, to-morrow may be a deep dell. I could here find what met my idea of an African desert—here some such place as a demoniac would resort to, to howl and suffer torment.

Major Bingham had made a causeway through this district, in order to enable his tenants to get from the eastern side of the Mullet to its western coast. Just enough of the remnants of the road still exist to prove the futility of the undertaking. He ought, previously, to have planted this his desert, with



Bent grass, as Lord Palmerston has done at Chiffony, in the county of Sligo, and so give a firm surface to the waste, before he attempted road-making. It is only in calm weather that sheep and cattle can be allowed to graze here. Rabbits, as I have already said, were some years ago most injuriously introduced, and they have, of course, while doing incalculable mischief increased, so that now, when attempts are making to banish them, it has hitherto been found impracticable. Major Bingham, whilst desirous to destroy the rabbits, and still wishing to have game, introduced hares here, and for a time had them carefully protected, supposing that they, as they do not burrow, would not create the mischief that rabbits do; but here he was mistaken, for the creature has been obliged to make its habits conformable to circumstances, and has given a proof how instinct can ascend towards rationality, and resort to those adjustments which *good sense* finds necessary; and so the hare, that in other places lies in her FORM, and never attempts to burrow, here dare not rest for a night on the shifting surface, therefore she has seen the necessity of burrowing, and she perforates a horizontal hole in a narrow sand hill, with an entrance on either side generally east and west, and she lies to the windward side of her hole, still retreating backwards as the storm blows, and ready to make a start when the danger is impending of her hill being carried away and dissipated altogether.

Our search for the graves was unsuccessful, the closing day and the shadowy gloom impending over these deep hollows, would not allow my young friend

to be guided by his land marks. This I at the time regretted much, but I have since, by the aid of my friend Mr. G. Crampton, been able to make up my own default. And so ends MY day in the Mullet of Erris. The following is supplied by my friend, who takes up the ground where I left it, and says :

“ About half a mile to the south-west of Binghamstown, in the sand hills, stands a rude conical pillar of stones, called *Leacht waar Erris*, or the Monument of the Slaughter of Erris. It is remarkable of this monument, that although about thirty years ago it was entirely concealed by the encroaching sand hills, and that beyond the memory of the oldest man, yet a tradition respecting such a monument existed amongst the people, and they could point out pretty nearly the spot where it OUGHT to be. A storm at length uncovered it by removing a sand hill, and confirmed the almost wavering faith of the people, as to the truth of the stories about it. The general belief on the subject is, that it was erected to commemorate a great battle fought on the spot where it stands, and where the invading army, which came from Munster (and why they should come from fair and fertile Munster to such a place as this, I am sure I don't understand ; they must have loved battle and conquest much when they came so far to gain a tract of sand hill and bog). At all events, the invading army and their king were utterly destroyed ; a hollow in the sandy banks, called *Lug na Fullagh*, or the hole of blood, is shown near the pillar, where the greatest slaughter was perpetrated, perhaps where the prisoners were butchered. Human bones are found in quantities, not only in the hollow

and about the pillar, but in most parts of the adjacent sand hills, thus pointing out the scene of extensive slaughter; and a semispherical mound, about a mile and a half distant, is still called after the king of Munster, and perhaps is the spot where he fell and was buried. This mound was opened some years ago, and the skeleton of a man standing erect was found in it, and some say a stone was found therein, with an inscription on it: the latter statement I doubt. The people, with the reverence they retain for the bones of the dead, restored the mound and its contents to their old state. Farther on, nearer to the sea shore, stands the ruin of what is called for distinction sake, the "new church of Cross." This old new church exemplifies the rapid inroads of the sea on this coast. Old men recollect when a carriage could have driven between the steeple of the church and the bank, but now half the steeple has fallen away, the bank having been carried off from under it, and more is giving way day after day.

"It was in this church that not long since three young women were discovered taking the *spancel* off a corpse. This *spancel*, called in Irish "stheioule dhrum agustharragh," signifying the skin of the back and of the belly, consists of a continuous band of skin taken from round the length of the body, viz. from the sole of one foot, up the outside of the leg and side, over the head and down the other side to the sole of the other foot, up the inside of that leg and down the inside of the other, until the stripe meets where it first set out; it is used as a love-charm, and its power is believed to be irresistible, it

being only necessary, in order to secure the affections of the victim, to tie the spancel round him while asleep ; if he does not awake during the operation all *must* turn out to the wish of the operator ; if he does awake, he dies before the end of the year ; so the poor desired one has no escape.

“ This disgusting and dark superstition is not only believed in here and revered, but even yet is sometimes practised, and it is confidently asserted that not very long ago it was resorted to, and *with success*, by persons far above the common sort, and in this way three young women, far from rich, or beautiful, or possessing any mental or bodily attractions that would be likely to secure the affections of young men, got very good matches, in every way far above their own position in life. This family have not yet given up the spancel, nor, as I am told, the intention of using it.\*

\* I have heard a circumstance, *for which I shall by no means vouch*, connected with this superstition, which goes to prove, if it have any foundation at all, how the best intentions may be frustrated by causes very unforeseen. The Very Rev. Dean L——, hearing of the wonders effected by the silent fraternity of Trappists, in the county of Waterford, felt desirous to introduce the brotherhood into Erris, and to that effect invited one of them to come and see the nakedness of the land. Accordingly he came, but, alas for himself and his cause, he did not return ;—for he fell sick—of what disease I know not, died, and was buried. Now, as the spancel is the more efficacious the more chaste and holy the body is from which it is stripped, of course the hide of a Trappist was invaluable ; and accordingly the remains of the poor ascetic were disinterred and rifled of its skin ; and the fact having transpired, it has unfortunately deterred (and why shouldn't it ?) the Trappists from venturing to settle in such a *charming* place as Erris. Of this dark and disgusting superstition, which, as reported to me, has been practised even by

"This old church stands on the nearest point to Innisgloria, of which I shall speak by-and-by. Going southwards we pass again by the mound of "Ree Mooni," or the mound of the king of Munster, to where the stone coffins are to be seen in the sand hills. This grave yard is supposed to have given the name of Kilmore (the large church) to the parish, which is co-extensive with the Mullet, and like the Leath waar Erris, it had until a few years ago, remained deeply covered with sand, even yet but little of it is uncovered. From the appearance of it

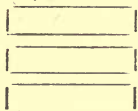
Protestant females, and of the better sort. It may be said in the words of old Heywood:—

"Of such like miscreants 'tis in Esay said,  
 We have strooke hands to league with death, and made  
 Covenant with hell.  
 Of such compacts and practices we find  
 Many most blasphemous in their kind,  
 When holy ceremonies (through the malicious,)  
 Are made idolatrous and superstitious.  
 When linen never washed is used, and he  
 Must hold a wand that's cut from such a tree,  
 With which he strikes the east and then the west,  
 The north and south, as to his purpose best :  
 That all his hair shorn off by night or day,  
 Thinking thereby to drive the devil away ;  
 That takes dust from a sepulchre to use,  
 Or from the grave the dead's bones to abuse ;  
 Or aught besides that shall seem retrograde  
 To reason's course, or what's by nature made."

These were some of the superstitious practices resorted to in England in the sixteenth century, as recorded by that curious old poetaster, Master Thomas Heywood, in his "Hierarchie of Blessed Angels;" but none of them come up to the horrid audacity of this love charm of the spancel stripe. The practice is not confined to Erris. Mr. Archdeacon, in his very amusing and well-written "Legends of Connaught," relates a very awful anecdote respecting its application in a more civilized part of Mayo.



in different places, an idea may be formed of its size, which gives it ample claim to the epithet of MORE or great—the coffins, or rather cysts are formed of flags, one flag forms each side, one at the head and foot, and the sepulchre thus formed, is covered with one or more flags. As far as I have seen these repositories, they lie in groups of three, thus—



the side stones are parallel, both in the groups, and from group to group. The coffins (unlike that of our friend in Glengad, eighteen feet long by four wide) are rather skimpy for able-bodied men, I have not seen any exceeding five feet in length, but from the appearance of charring in the bones, and other evidences of the action of fire in and about the coffins, we may be led to the conclusion, that the bodies were burned previous to their being deposited in these cysts.\* Some stones polished (which might have been large flat beads), and portions of rings of steatite (which might have been the handles of small urns, no other part of the urn, however, being found here), were taken up.

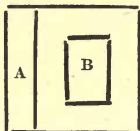
“ These sandhills of the Mullet are of great extent,

\* It would seem that the remains of human bodies found in the ancient repositories in Ireland, under the cromleachs and in cysts under ground, were subjected to incremation before they were deposited. In two such depositories lately exposed to view in the Phoenix Park, near Dublin, the bones, accompanied with rude urns, beads, shells, and other barbarous relics, were found half burned in receptacles so short as not sufficient to contain an unburnt human body.

they are daily increasing, and must, if effectual steps are not taken to arrest their progress, eventually overwhelm the greater part of the peninsula. The phenomena of electricity in these hills during stormy weather are remarkable: a lambent flame runs up the steep sides of these eminences, and fills the deep dells, as it were, with lakes of flame. This lambent and mantling flame often continues stationary for a considerable time, I never heard of its doing injury. One evening last winter, just as dark was approaching, Mr. Stack (the Protestant clergyman,) and I, were riding across these hills, when suddenly the wind arose, we were overtaken by a sand storm, and while desirous to escape from the hurtling of this most disagreeable of hurricanes, I was in the midst of my annoyance surprised with the sudden change from dusk to bright light, and a moment after was astonished still more to see not only Mr. Stack and his horse, who were before me, but also the head and mane of my own, and also the top of the stick in my hand fringed with fire. However, the storm soon blew over, and we suffered no otherwise than in the surprise and terror from the enveloping electricity and the peppering from the sand hail.\*

\* The phenomena of meteoric electricity seem to be of frequent occurrence, and very interesting in this western land. What Mr. Crampton has observed amidst the sand-hills of the Mullet, Mr. Henri has frequently seen in his immediate district. One fine night not long ago he observed a globe of fire settle on the top of his flag staff, and thence throw off innumerable pencillings of brilliant rays. He says that while cruising in the Mediterranean, he has seen such globes settle on the mast head of the vessel he was on board; they are there called St. Elmo's lights. I have also heard, by means of a young clergyman who has lately made Erris

“ About half a mile to the southward of the other graves I have just spoken of, on the sea shore, is a sepulchral monument called the Leacht na Calliagh, or the stone of the hag. Its plan is



A is the grave, B a square of about four feet, surrounded by a double row of stones, and evidently once covered with a large single flag, something like a cromleach. The calliagh, or hag, is said to have been a powerful enchantress; she transformed the three sons and daughters of her husband, a king, (to be sure these step-mothers are cruel) by a former wife, into swans, whom she compelled to resort to “the strongest streams of the ocean;” but she could not hinder them from coming every Sabbath day, what time the holy bell sounded from the sacred cænobium of Innisgloria, to attend mass at the altar there, otherwise their enchantment would have been perpetual, and to this day they would have continued breasting the “ocean stream,” as continues the solitary crane his standing on Inniskea, but for the merits of St. Brenain, who was propitious to them; and so these graceful birds were seen Sunday after Sunday sitting with protruded

the scene of his ministry, and who, while devotedly given to his clerical duties, has a taste for natural history—that the bogs of Erris abound in luminous insects; so much so, that when walking through them after the sun sets, the feet of the bog traveller are covered with light.

necks on the collar beams of the roof of the Teampul na Farr, and each time as the host was raised, these ecclesiastical creatures, by the drooping of their wings and the bending of their necks, attested before the congregation of the faithful, that in humility and devotion they responded to the solemnity of the mystery. Such devotion could not go without its reward; the prayers of St. Brenain prevailed, and they were disenchanted; they were no more swans, but human beings. But even the saint could not retain on earth spirits that but for the enchantment would have been long since called to their eternal rest; therefore, on being restored to humanity, the touch of a sinful mortal caused the restored princes and princess to moulder with slow but visible decay into dust. An ancient Irish poem, of which but a part now remains, records their sufferings, their changes, their restoration and manner of their dissolution. The princess, who seems to have been the most musical of these dying swans, makes a long speech as she is in the act of decomposition, and is quite particular in directions as to her burial. The oration is directed to the cleri aigh, the holy clergy, and she entreats of them that her two brothers, Conel and Con, should be buried on each side of her, but her favourite Hugh in her arms. The literal translation of her dying directions is as follows:—

“In this way arrange our graves,—  
 Conel and Con the strong  
 On my two sides,  
 And on my bosom between my two arms  
 Oh Cleri.—place my Hugh (or Hy) !

The streams of ocean in which Con and his bro-

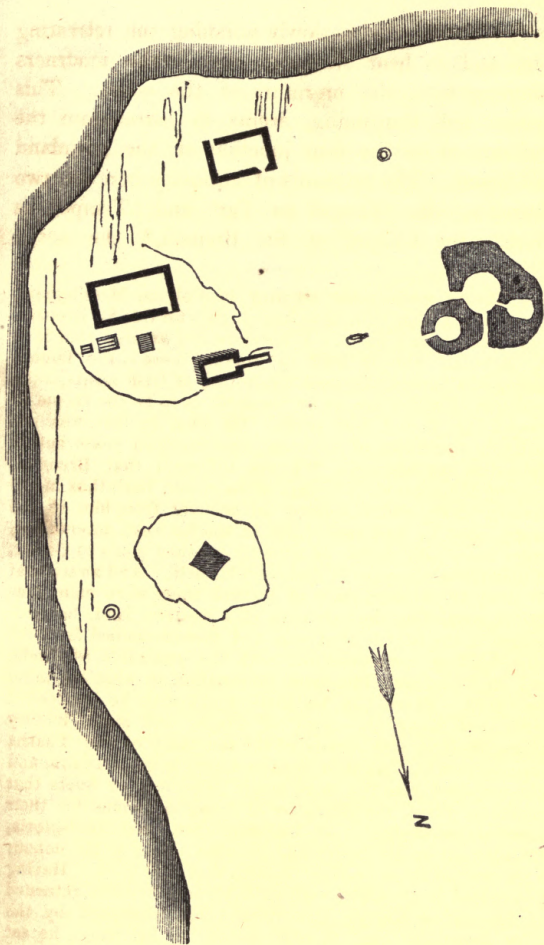
ther were condemned to serve out their enchantment, is still called Straffoda Con, or the long rough stream of Con. It is at the mouth of Broadhaven, not far from the point of Rinroe (which we will hereafter have occasion to mention). Other traditions have it, that the enchantment of this royal family was not to terminate until a man came from the east and fought for the swans ; the battle took place not far from the present town of Belmullet, adjoining Mr. Carter's house at Shaen Lodge, and is still called "Tholler na Amloodheer." Unable to proceed to Innisgloria myself, I commissioned my friend, Mr. Crampton, to go and report for me, and he has done as follows, as much, I hope, to the satisfaction of the reader, as to mine :—

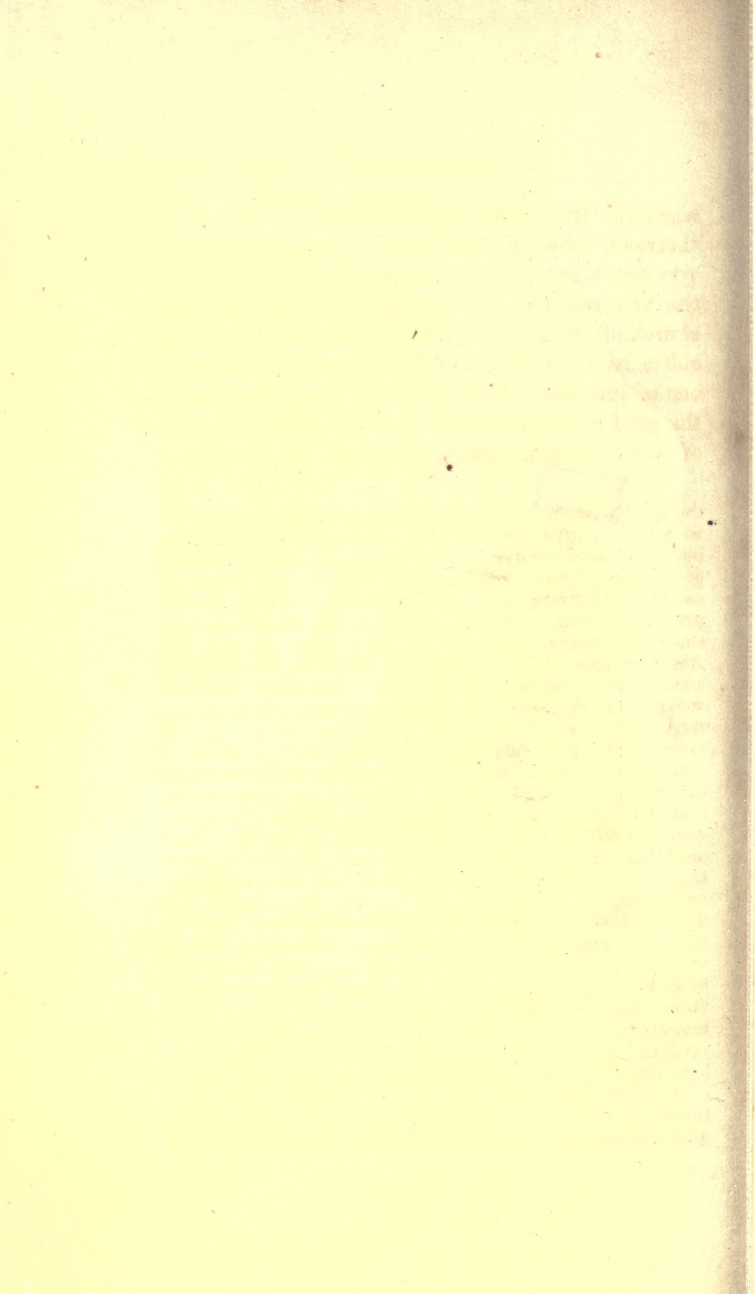
"Somewhat to the southward of the old church of Cross runs (at low water) a long point into the sea, which reaches within a short distance of the island of Innisgloria. Tradition says, that once this point was above high water, and extended so near the island, that a plank completed the connection. In process of time a ferry boat was used, in which passengers could pass and repass by means of a rope stretched from shore to shore ; the island was a favourite place for interment, but has not, of late, been much resorted to, in consequence of the increasing difficulty of approach ; however, even yet, pious individuals who are desirous that their bodies should rest in 'glory,' and, for the sake of their souls, insist on being buried in this island of saints ; the funerals always approach the island along the point mentioned above ; and it is very interesting to see



the solemn procession slowly pursuing the retreating tide, and to hear the wild cry of the mourners mingling with the murmurs of the ocean. This custom still continuing, seems to corroborate the tradition as to the near junction of the mainland and island. The remnants of antiquity here are two churches, viz. 'Tempel na Far' and 'Tempel na More,' the Chapel of St. Brenain,\* the seven

\* Having made some scrutiny in Colgan, Messingham, Lanigan, and other Hibernian hagiologists for this St. Brenain, I can find no such name. I therefore feel assured that it is St. Brendan who is held in worship here,—the famous Bishop of Clonfert, the most interesting of Irish saints,—the incidents of whose life are so romantic as to be the theme of many a legend and holy poem. He who, in fact, was the veritable discoverer of America, nine hundred years before Columbus set his sail. We are informed that Brendan, hearing of the previous voyage of his cousin Barinthus in the western ocean, and obtaining an account from him of the happy isles he had landed on in the far west, determined, under the strong desire of winning heathen souls to Christ, to undertake a voyage of discovery himself. And aware that all along the western coast of Ireland there were many traditions respecting the existence of a western land, he proceeded to the islands of Arran, and there remained for some time, holding communication with the venerable St. Enda, and obtaining from him much information on what his mind was bent. There can be little doubt that he proceeded northward along the coast of Mayo, and made inquiry among its bays and islands of the remnants of the Tuatha Danaan people, that once were so expert in naval affairs, and who acquired from the more stupid Milesians or Scots that overcame them, the character of being magicians for their superior knowledge. At Inniskea, then, and Innisgloria, Brendan set up his cross; and, in after times, in his honour were erected those curious remains that still exist. Having prosecuted his inquiries with all diligence, Brendan returned to his native Kerry; and, from a bay sheltered by the lofty mountain that is now known by his name, he set sail for the Atlantic land; and, directing his course towards





leachtas, the well, the 'aigh,' and the three thorrows, none of which seem of pagan origin, the very names seem to indicate their Christian character; the first two are, the church of the men and the church of the women—that of the men seems the older, exhibiting traces of Cyclopean architecture in one of its walls. Perhaps it was some time before the good friars discovered that the persuasive voice of woman was necessary to ensure the efficacy of

the south west, in order to meet the summer solstice, or what we would call the tropic—after a long and rough voyage, his little barks being well provisioned,—he came to summer seas, where he was carried along without the aid of sail or oar for many a long day. This, it is to be presumed, was the great gulf stream, and which brought his three vessels to shore somewhere about the Virginia capes, or where the American coast trends eastward and forms the New England states. Here landing, he and his companions marched steadily into the interior for fifteen days, and then came to a large river flowing from east to west: this evidently was the river Ohio. And this the holy adventurer was about to cross, when he was accosted by a person of noble presence—but whether a real or visionary man does not appear—who told him he had gone far enough; that further discoveries were reserved for other men, who would in due time come and Christianize all that pleasant land. The above, when tested by common sense, clearly shows that Brendan landed on a continent, and went a good way into the interior, met a great river running in a different direction from those he heretofore crossed; and here, from the difficulty of transit or want of provisions, or deterred by increasing difficulties, he turned back; and no doubt in a dream he saw some such vision which embodied his own previous thought, and satisfied him that it was expedient to return home. It is said he remained seven years away and returned to set up a college of 3000 monks at Clonfert—and he then died in the odour of sanctity. May not the three graceful swans mentioned in the legend of Innisgloria, be the three vessels with white sails that carried Brendan and his family over the

their prayers. The chapel of St. Brenain (who is said to have erected all the buildings in the island) is a very rude structure, about fourteen feet long by eight or nine wide, and from the inclination of the upper part of the walls, it would seem that formerly it had a stone roof. It contains the statue of the saint (of which I send the sketch), and the altar.



The statue seems to have been once a good specimen of carving, and is said to have been painted, but

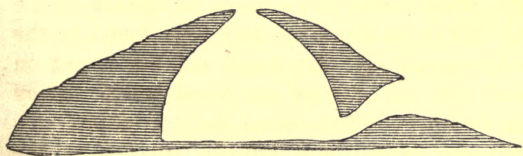
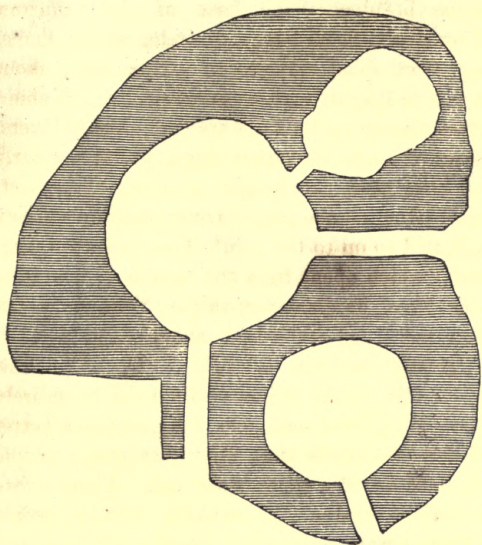
western main? and may not their condemnation to go forth and breast the strongest stream of the ocean, be a dark announcement of the long voyage on the bosom of the Florida Gulf stream? The wonder is, that that most ingenious of antiquarians, General Vallancey, did not make as much of this legend and allegory, as he has done of others not half so beautiful or so substantial. \* \* \* See the Life of St. Brendan in the MS. Codex Kilkenniensis in Marsh's Library.



time and weather have sadly defaced it. It is regarded with great veneration, and worshipped by devotees who come here to perform stations, and it is regularly kissed by every Roman Catholic visitant, whether on a station or not. The stations are performed round the seven leachtas, or monuments—the penitent going round each, on his knees thrice; and upright, thrice. The most respected of these leachtas is that called ‘Leachta rillik Wurragh,’ or the monument of the reliques of Mary; this is seated on a mound which seems artificial, and in which I am strongly of opinion there are more of those ‘thurrows.’ Indeed, this leachta, besides its cognomen of ‘rillik Wurragh,’ has also that of ‘thurrow.’ If this opinion be the correct one, it would seem to argue that these ‘beehive’ structures were merely sepulchres. That containing the remains of the saint, having a monument raised over it, and called the ‘monument of the Thurrow of the reliques of Mary,’—besides the statue of the saint in the chapel, are the remains of his altar, of timber also, once painted, but now loose and clumsily put up, so as to look like a stool. The well, ‘tubber,’ is remarkable for growing bloody whenever a woman goes to draw water from it. As long as that idea holds, no Roman Catholic girl will cause its waters to blush. The ‘aigh’ I don’t know what to make of; it has greatly the appearance of a kiln, very circular, and having a small door into it on a level with the ground. The princess, who was the swan, calls upon ‘cleri aigh’ to obey her injunctions; cleri is a clerk, but of ‘aigh’ I do not know the meaning (quere agios, holy). But the most extraordi-

nary of all the antiquities are the 'thurrows,' like enormous beehives: the base of the 'thurrow more' (or great) is an irregular circle, whose diameters vary from about fourteen to sixteen feet; about twelve feet in height, with an aperture at top of about three feet diameter; its sides are composed of layers, or courses of stone, or rather flags, pretty regularly laid, so that after the height of about three feet, each succeeding course projects over that immediately under it, and so on to the top. The 'thurrow beg' (or small) which opens from the large one, is a more irregular circle, its diameters varying from about ten to seven feet; and its height about eight feet: it seems greatly inclined to fall. The 'thurrow mhule' is still more ruinous—its roof is entirely fallen in: the plans I send you will give you a better idea of these buildings than any description; people seem to have no idea as to their use. There exists still a curious custom of breaking bread; people going there always bring some bread with them, and in the 'thurrow more' each person breaks with the person next him.

I have noticed every thing in the island now but some stone graves or 'corp teach' similar to those in the sandy banks, and situated as marked in the plan. No rat or mouse has ever been found in the island;—people say they would not live if put on it, and that the clay of the island would destroy them elsewhere. This seems decisive against this island ever having been actually attached to the main. There is a family living on the island, which is the property of Major Bingham. The enchanted





land or 'Thalow tha whaoy Dhruidhaigh,' is once in seven years seen from it. It is described as a fine, arable, and wooded country—not like Erris: There exists an opinion that a coal of fire would break the enchantment and restore the land, as it did Innisboffin. There is also seen a large building called 'Monaster Ladhra,' described as adorned with turrets and battlements, fortified with a moat and drawbridge, and inhabited. Horsemen fully caparisoned being seen to issue from it. It is situated between Inniskea and Innisgloria."

The information I have been able to collect from Mr. Crampton and others, concerning Inniskea is limited (Mr. Crampton not having had any opportunity, more than I had, of landing there). There are two ancient sepulchral mounds on it, and it contains a few inhabitants, who know nothing of the fated crane that old writers say is to stand there until the "crack of doom." He *may* be there, but no one in these days ever saw him; but they have what is better, called by some the Neevoge, or, as others pronounce it, Knaveen; both mean "the little saint," and I prefer the latter pronunciation, which may not be a bad derivation for the English word knave, Latin, *gnavus*—a knowing fellow. For the knaveen of Inniskea must be a knowing one indeed, for, by his instrumentality, the natives consider they can raise or allay a tempest; raise a storm when a ship nears the island, and so they may get in a wreck; or allay it when their own boats are out at sea in a gale of wind. The knaveen is a stone image of the rudest construction, attired in an undyed



flannel dress, which is every New Year's Day renewed. Of course the knaveen has his annals, one event of which may be worth stating:—Some years ago, a pirate happening to land on the island, amused himself by setting fire to the houses of the people, all of which burned but too readily, save one; and the ferocious leader thus seeing one house untouched, urged on with menaces his followers to consummate their destructive doings by burning *this* also; but they could not; as often as they applied fire to it out it went: they might as well burn one of the ocean rocks. Observing this, he ordered the house to be diligently searched, and finding the “knaveen,” he commanded that the holy image should be smashed to pieces with a sledge. Perhaps he was told of the “knaveen's” power not only of arresting fire, but of raising wind, and, as he often roved along the coast, he of course did not desire to leave the storm compeller in the hands of those to whom he had been so cruel. Thus, having had his wicked will, the pirate sailed away, it is hoped never to return. But the natives, the moment he was gone, collected the fragments of the saint, bound them together with thongs of sheepskin, and to keep him warm and pleasant, dressed him out in a suit of flannel, which, as we have already stated, is renewed from year to year. It is, however, considered that the “knaveen” has never fully recovered the treatment he received from the pirate's sledge-hammer, nor are they quite so sure of his power over the elements. Perhaps, after all, this is not so much the fault of the idol as of their failing faith.

He still, however, is fervently kissed, and had in reverence by all.

Thus ends my day in the Mullet of Erris. I am almost ashamed to present to the public the results of so short and superficial a visit to a district that not only requires but deserves a much longer and closer inspection.

## CHAPTER VI.

A Rough Day—A Sail up Broadhaven—Coast-guards—A Kind Reception by an able Friend—A Dreary Ride—Portnacloy—Sea and Cliff Scenery—Stags of Broadhaven—The Crooked Old Woman—The Slipping Ladies—Neptune's Hall—A Glorious Cave—A Tourist in Good Luck—A Bird caught as you would a Lobster—A Yarn about "The Gentry" spun by a Seaman—Opinions of the Erris Mountaineers concerning Foxes, and their Acts of Propitiation towards them—A Ludicrous Mistake—St Galligan—Pious and Faithful Friends—A Person Discharging many functions—The Use of a Large Telescope—Things Fiscally Wrong without being morally so—Delights of a Journey over a Soft Country without Bridges or Roads on a day wet and windy—A Way under Water and over Water, only fit to be undertaken by a Wild Duck—C. O.s' Exodus from Erris.

ON the following day, which was stormy and rainy, I took advantage of a coast-guard's boat which was going from Belmullet to another station at the mouth of Broadhaven, to pay a visit to Lieutenant Henri, the commander of the station at Dunkeegan, to whom I had a letter of introduction, and through whose means I hoped, in spite of the weather, to be enabled to see some of the cliff scenery at the northern point of Erris, of which I had heard much, and indeed it was in the hope of seeing it that I ventured into Erris at all.

Captain Nugent, my kind host at Belmullet, kindly accompanied me part of the way, and under the power of a wind, which a landsman would consider a storm, but which was directly in our favour, under a small sail closely reefed, our well-appointed galley went

with the smooth velocity of a sea bird. It appeared to me to go so fast that it would not allow the angry waves to overtake her, and with changeful promptitude we passed hill, headland, and inlet.

No where is motion so apparent, and at the same time pleasurable, as when in a small, but well trimmed and appointed boat ; you scud along without any visible exertion of human or mechanic power : the threatening elements, the subdued means of velocity, made subservient to your cool and well-ordered volitions. I like the placid firm countenances of these veteran coast-guards, they look so calm and yet so prudent ; I have their fine English features in my mind's eye, every line denoting hardship endured, vigour at command, and a sense of duty superior to every feeling of difficulty and danger. I consider the coast-guard establishment one of the greatest blessings ever conferred on Ireland—a positive blessing in not only putting an effectual stop to smuggling, the nurse of profligacy and crime ; to wrecking, the stimulus to dishonesty and cruelty, all around our shores ; but also, in locating prudent, honest, humanized, and often religious men, with their nice wives and children, and all their clean and decent habits amongst a dirty, ignorant, and careless people. I have never visited a coast-guard station on any of Ireland's shores, that I did not observe the wonderful contrast exhibited in the dwellings and the habits of the inmates to all around, and that I did not entertain the rational expectation that in due time such examples of a more excellent way would have an effect in civilizing the surrounding natives.

I arrived at Lieutenant Henri's house at Dunkeegan, about four o'clock, and was received with the kindest welcome, and desire to promote my wishes, which were, if possible, to see the cliffs and caves at the entrance of Broadhaven that evening.

"You have (said he) but an hour and a half's light; you have a ride of three miles over a mountain before you can take boat—but let us at once set out, it rains and blows, but the wind is favourable, it blows *off* the coast. I think we may get into *THE CAVE*, and if so you will be in luck, for I do not think that for these two months past you could have succeeded, or shall we even now succeed if the wind veers a point or two from whence it now blows."

So in a few minutes we were on horseback, and through rain and mist urging our rough way over a mountain path, that scarcely any but a mountain pony could have trod in safety.

This ride was dreary and exceedingly unpleasant; the mountain mist would not allow us to see any thing at a distance, and what was near at hand was made more deplorably desolate by the state of the atmosphere. We passed a wretched village, and then taking the bed of a stream, as our best and safest road, we at length got to the little inlet of Portnacloy, which appears to be formed by the mountains on each side, being riven, and a straight chasm formed of nearly equal breadth for half a mile, and then terminating in a steep and narrow beach covered with rolled stones of large dimensions, up which the waves dash and shiver into foam.

Here a boat was in waiting for us, and in a minute



we were afloat and rowing rapidly down this little harbour, which resembles the Killery Bay in its narrowest parts, and is wild and grand indeed. The cliffs rose on either side like walls, and here and there a trapdyke either protrudes like a great spur, or decomposed, as in one instance, it is worn away by the waves, and the place where it was is now vacant, and forms a cave as upright in its sides, and straight and horizontal in its roof, as if it were formed by art as the adit of a mine, or the door-way into some subterraneous apartment. But more of this by-and-by. We were in a few minutes, under the influence of four as well urged oars as I ever saw handled, at the mouth of Portnacloy, and certainly of all the sea scenery I had ever witnessed, what I now enjoyed was incomparably the most varied and most grand.

The evening had in a measure cleared up; the rain-fraught nimbus, that had heretofore swept low and drizzling, had burst asunder; a patch of blue ether every now and then became visible, and rays from the declining sun, dim to be sure and tearful, sent their slanting and fitful lights on cave and cliff, on islet and headland; and while all on the higher eminences was cloudcapped, and Benwee, involved in gloom, and out at sea beyond the influence of the mountain shelter, the whole ocean was one scene of boiling turbulence, and the leaden sky and the leaden waters seemed mingled together; under the land and beneath the influence of the partial sunbeam, every thing was absolutely grand and yet quite beautiful—the many remnants of the dispersed nimbus, in

broken packs came down from Benwee, and rolled off seawards—indeed these misty wreaths, white and tissue like, under the illuminating sun were sweetly, beautifully adventitious, and there was one of the most picturesque of cliff gorges opening out eastward from the entrance of Portnacloy, its disturbed ranges rising from beneath the sea in most fantastically waving lines, and covered with all sorts and shades of vegetation, upon which the evening sun's rays were sparkling, and bringing out all their tints; and here a waterfall came tossing down a precipice: and there an absolutely perpendicular chasm of a dark and horrid *lug*, with all the *debris* of shattered shingle below, evinced that some recent disruption had taken place, and as yet had not allowed time and moisture to clothe it with any vegetation. Then to the westward of Portnacloy's entrance, what a variety of cliff scenery. I never saw any thing at all like it. Away about a mile off were what are called the stags, I assume that they should with more propriety be called stacks. These are seven islets in a group, that have the appearance of gigantic corn stacks, rising with singular uniformity of structure, and ending in points, which points were now illuminated by the setting sun and surrounded with myriads of white-winged sea fowl.

Near us to the right, rose another islet, evidently detached from the main by some great convulsion, and conformable as it is in its stratifications with the opposite cliffs, it rises from the water in curious irregularity, and every turn of your boat and change of position gives it a new aspect, and you find many

resemblances for it. The name it is called by, is the crooked old woman (Calliagh Crom). Yes, you may fancy her head (the perch of the unapproachable sea-fowl) decorated with a white cap, and she has a brown corrugated nutcracker nose and chin turned witch-like to her native north, and the red iron-stained whinstone represents clothes, her broken back clad in a red bodice like a true Connaught woman, and her brown petticoats flounced with the green sea vegetations, that envelope her feet ; under the Old Woman we steer, and I could shoot a gull, which I would not do for the world, as he sits so confidently on the adjoining mainland cliff, and we steer on through the magnificent chasm, and turning from Calliagh Crom my attention is directed to what is really curious on the mainland.

At one spot the cliff ceases to be perpendicular, and assumes the form of an inclined plane; you might conclude that were you placed sitting about five hundred feet above, you would slide down easily, and with great rapidity, as on what is called a "Montagne Russe;" and the smooth and shining moisture trickling along the plane, might be supposed to aid your descent by communicating the necessary lubrication. Now imagine, two masses of rock, each as large at least, as any poor man's house in Erris, that evidently at some time or other had been detached from the summit, when we may suppose that on some fine day they were resolved to enjoy the pleasure of a "Montagne Russe." Well, down they slide, and lubricated in their passage by the aforesaid moisture, they come gracefully and *en suite*, as we may imagine would

do a pair of Parisian girls ; but, not to the bottom. No ; after performing four hundred and fifty feet of their slide there they stop, about fifty feet from the sea level, and why they stopped, or how they *could* stop, I am sure I cannot tell, but there they *are* arrested in their course, a kick of a foot you would suppose must send them down to the bottom, and yet there they have stood ever since the convulsion that launched them from their original site, and there are likely to stand until some future shake sends them into the deep.

Now we have rowed through the strait, or rather chasm that divides Calliagh Crom from the mountain, and the scene opens out a little ; and off westwards, smiling under the uncertain sun, another and a larger islet makes its appearance. This is Kid Island, just at the entrance of Broadhaven ; and Benwee, still nearer, rises its perpendicular wall nine hundred feet from the deep sea, and its top is wrapt in mist, and nearer now, and within a cable length, we have the object of our evening's excursion — and the cave of Doonminulla opens out its stupendous and regular arch—ay, as regular as if an architect had just withdrawn his centres, and left it a specimen of his taste and science. As I have said, the weather, owing to the range of the wind, was favourable, and therefore there was no real difficulty in gaining with our well-appointed crew and boat, an entrance—but still it was a nervous thing, and required watchfulness and expertness in the helmsman and rowers—for the heave of the sea was truly stupendous, owing to the heavy gale that was blowing out of shelter of the land. I am sure that the

boat rose and fell with a difference of, at least, fifteen feet; it was, therefore, essential to keep in the centre of the arch as we passed in—and truly it was a glorious span—but when entrance was made, when the enormous apartment was gained, and we rose and fell so slowly, placidly, grandly, in the centre of a dome seventy feet in diameter, and forty feet in height; and there was a fine lateral light thrown into it, exhibiting all the tints that lichens, mosses, and its mineral stainings gave it—the whole was magnificent.

Far away in the interior, there seemed a mysterious recess, and something plunged yonder, it must have been a seal, and the splash sent its ringing reverberations all around, and then a black ominous-looking cormorant rose on slow wing out of the distant gloom, and retreated where none could follow. Our commander was well supplied with fire-arms, and determined to show off all the wonders of the cave, which, I may say, he has *invented*—for he was the first that brought educated admiration to beam upon it, and called other than the dull fisherman in his corragh, to come and admire this HALL OF NEPTUNE. Well, off went the fowling-piece, and echoes there were multitudinous, and shrieks of sea birds, and moanings amongst recesses, far and near fell off in lower and lingering cadences. There certainly was sublimity in all this—but owing to the state of the weather, the foaming state of the far off sea, the rolling of the partially dispersed rain clouds, the heaving of the ocean swell, the tossing of the waterfalls as they came down roaring angrily off the cliff,



and now and then a sudden flash from the setting sun, throwing a partial prismatic streak on the dark eastern clouds—not quite a rainbow—but a weather gall, an acknowledgment that the coming storm was prevailing over the departing orb—this transient and sad smile, as I may say, of the weeping heavens, called up sensations of the melancholy sublime—was full and sufficient warning then given to our experienced crew, to put about and hasten our retreat from a scene so full of grandeur and of danger.

Mr. Henri assured me, and I could well believe him, that nothing could be more beautiful than this cave, and all its concomitant scenery on a placid summer's eve, when the sun's strong clear beams are sent slantingly into this noble grotto, and thus all its vegetable and mineral tints are brought out—when the windings of all its recesses are just so far exposed that you may exercise your imagination as to their multitude and immensity; when looking out seaward the regular arch forms the dark foreground of a sparkling picture, on which it is drawn as on a plate of silver; far away a sail making her offing for America; nearer, the pretty minute corragh of the fishermen; and nearer again the picturesque stags and the Calliagh Crom—oh, how I should like to be here on such an evening.

“Indeed, sir, (says my friend,) you might be here for months, and not hap on such an auspicious hour. I have been often for three months, even in summer, watching to catch such a favourable opportunity and without success, and I must say, that with such weather as we now are vexed with,

and at such a short notice, you have been singularly fortunate in getting a sight of it even under present circumstances."

Having landed at Portnacloy, and mounted our ponies, on our return home we had to take the bed of a mountain torrent, the usual way in wintry weather of getting through this wild district, and of this I shall have more to say by-and-by. Proceeding along the water course, one of these pretty birds, called water blackbirds, rose and skimmed its short quick flight along the surface of a pool. My remark, that I had heard this was the only bird that is known to walk at the bottom of the water, called forth an observation from Mr. Henri, which appears to me a curious ornithological fact.

"I know another bird (says he) that walks under water; for some time ago, in a lobster pot, sunk in four fathoms water, I caught a cormorant. The fellow must have walked into it as do the lobsters."

"I suppose (said I) the curiosity of the circumstance compensated you for your bad substitute for the best of shell fish."

Rising now up the face of the hill, and passing through a tortuous ravine, my companion pointed to a little green hillock that rose on the side of the stream, and its softer and brighter surface contrasted prettily with the sombre heath that mantled all around.

"There is a story connected with this Fairy Hill, which I must tell you, it will beguile the tediousness of our dreary road.

"On a dark gloomy day in the month of November, I made a visit of inspection to the coast-guard

station at Doonkeeghan, situated about two miles to the westward of 'Benwee,' and some article being required for the use of that station that could be supplied at Portnacloy, I started homewards, accompanied by one of the crew. My companion, a rough curly-headed northern, and myself ascended the ridge of mountain to the southward of Benwee, entered a dark cloud that hung over it, and, *after poking a couple of holes through it*, descended on the opposite side, and skirted the western side of the hollow as before described, till we came to the side of the glen immediately over this Fairy Mount; we here scrambled down, and stepping from one rock to another, crossed the rivulet where its waters washed the rocky base of the sward-covered little hillock.

"On reaching the opposite side, the wild beauty of the scene arrested my steps for a few minutes; for the outline of Benwee faintly appeared at the upper end of the precipitous glen, through a cloud of mist that hung about its sides, and the rivulet, swollen by late heavy rains, dashed impetuously from ledge to ledge, giving the spot, at all times wild in the extreme, an appearance of dreariness and solitary grandeur I had never before remarked, and which called to my recollection the numerous marvellous tales I had heard from the country people respecting this, said to be, haunted glen. Turning round, therefore, to my companion, I said, 'That hillock is, I believe, called *Cruickeen na Shehoge*, is it not?' 'It is, sir,' answered he. 'I have heard many accounts of the "*shehoga*," or "gentry,"' (a name given to the fairies by the country people,) resumed I; 'pray have you

ever seen any of them?' 'Na,' replied my curly-headed companion, in his broad northern dialect; 'I ne'er ken'd onything uglier than mysel', sir.' 'Nor will you ever, in all probability,' returned I, smiling at the double meaning conveyed in my reply, which my attendant appeared to take in the sense most complimentary to himself, as he laughingly replied, 'The de'il a bit I think I e'er shall, sir.' We then ascended the opposite side of the glen, and on reaching a boggy level, were too busily occupied hopping from tussock to tussock, otherwise 'bog trotting,' to exchange another word about the 'gentry,' and shortly after we reached Portnacloy.

"About four o'clock in the afternoon, Bryan O'Donnell, for I shall call him so to avoid giving offence, having been supplied with such articles as his station stood in need of, left Portnacloy on his return home. A close day had been followed by a foggy evening, but as he was well acquainted with the country, I did not entertain the slightest doubt of his reaching Doonkeeghan in safety, therefore was not a little surprised when, at about ten o'clock, my door was violently thrown open, and my late travelling companion rushed in with as much precipitation as if pursued by a legion of imps, exclaiming at the same time, 'Oh, it's a' true! it's a' true!! it's a' true!!!' To add to my astonishment, his countenance betrayed evident signs of fear, for his curly hair appeared as if it had been operated upon by a wool card; his jacket was turned inside out, and his clothes were covered with mud, as a sailor would say, 'from clew to earing.'

“Displeased at his unceremonious entrance, which I could not account for, and puzzled at his reiterated exclamation of ‘It’s a’ true! it’s a’ true!’ for our morning’s conversation never entered my head, I angrily demanded, ‘What is it that’s true, sir?’ To this crusty interrogatory, however, I for some time received no other reply than ‘It’s a’ true, sir;’ and anger had nearly given place to pity, for I really began to suspect the poor fellow was bereft of his senses, when, to the horror of my domestics who had been drawn to the spot, he added in awfully solemn tone, ‘I ha’ been with the gentry.’ The real cause of his terror now flashed across my mind. I ordered a servant to give him a glass of the ‘*native*’—the mountain remedy *in those days* for all ailments,—and when he was sufficiently recovered to do so, I directed him to relate what had occurred to him since his departure in the evening, which, with many an uneasy look at the door, he did, to the astonishment of all those around him, who open-mouthed listened to his narration. It was in substance as follows:—

“Night, it appeared, had overtaken him before he reached the Fairy Mount glen, and he was descending the side nearest to Portnacloy, and was within a short distance of the spot where our morning’s conversation took place, when he suddenly observed through the fog several pale lights in the direction of the ‘*Cruic-keen na shehoge*,’ which he at first supposed proceeded from a village called ‘Cariatyge,’ which lay about a mile off in the same line. At this moment he made a false step on a ‘tussock,’ and fell headlong into the mud and water that surrounded it, when peals of



laughter, shouts, and clapping of hands immediately resounded in every direction around him. Astonished—but by his own account not at all frightened—he had endeavoured to gain the rivulet, but all his endeavours had been ineffectual, and he had wandered about he knew not whither, but believed he had been on the top of ‘Benwee,’ as he thought he had at one time heard the sound of the sea beneath him. During the whole of the time, from the darkness of the night and the unevenness of the ground, he had scarcely been able to keep on his legs a minute together, and he had only extricated himself from one bog hole to take possession of another; which floundering had appeared to cause infinite merriment to his mischievous and invisible companions, as every fall had been followed by obstreperous sounds of mirth, which bore a very marked proportion to the depth of mud and water the poor northern had been accommodated with, while to add to his perplexity, numerous pale lights danced around him occasionally in every direction. At length fully convinced that he was the sport of the ‘*gentry*,’ whose existence he had hitherto disbelieved, and having heard in his childhood that the turning of clothes was a charm against their power, he formed the resolution of turning his jacket, which he had scarcely accomplished ere he found himself at the back of my house, and within a few yards of the spot he had started from six hours before, and fearing a prolongation of his disagreeable nocturnal ramble, he had bolted into my dwelling in the unceremonious manner already described.

“The report of the mischievous trick that had

been played on poor Bryan O'Donnel by the gentry, with all its attendant circumstances, spread like wild-fire in the country. That it had been inflicted on him as a punishment for his expressed disbelief in the morning—for our conversation had got wind—no one in the neighbourhood for a moment doubted; in fact, the short interval of time that had elapsed between his expressions of doubt and of his having been forced into a conviction of the existence of such beings, together with his having felt the effects of their power on the very spot where those doubts had been expressed, were circumstances, in the opinion of the old folks, quite conclusive, and apparently afforded them much pleasure, which was not a little increased by the consideration that O'Donnel was a Protestant; for whether it be that shehoges, pookies, ghosts, and hobgoblins of every description have an aversion to heretical company and observations, I really will not pretend to say, but this much I believe must be admitted, that their visits are principally confined to holy Romans: a piece of complaisance, by-the-by, not much to be regretted, when the annoyance and strange tricks they play their friends are taken into consideration. That the persons so honoured also swallow with the greatest facility tales that would choke their less favoured and naughty neighbours, cannot be denied; and that the capability of my friends in the neighbourhood on that point was put to the test, will shortly appear from what follows.

“Two or three days after the circumstance I have just related took place, one of the Portnacloy men, whom for the reason already mentioned I shall take

the liberty of christening Andrew M'Neil, a very well conducted, inoffensive, but rather timid man, was sent according to custom to the next station to the eastward, called Port Turling, in order to bring any letters or orders that might arrive there from '*head-quarters*' for the western stations; and as in so backward a place the return of the orderly was an event all felt interested in, his arrival was anxiously looked for by every person at the station. The usual time of the orderly's return, however, had passed, the day had closed some hours, but no Andrew M'Neil had made his appearance, and I was endeavouring to assign some plausible reason for his absence—at one time attributing it to his having lost his way, for the night was foggy, and at another, to his having been prevented from leaving Port Turling by the closeness of the weather—when my door slowly opened, and in tottered the unfortunate orderly, a tolerably good representative of the gentleman '*who drew Priam's curtain at the dead of night.*' I cannot exactly say, with the strict regard to truth that pervades my narrative, that his hair was erect, for this simple reason, the poor man was a candidate for a wigship, but his eyes were fixed and disagreeably protruded from their sockets, something like a lobster's; the blood appeared to have deserted his cheeks and to have congealed in his lips, the dirty whiteness of the one forming a remarkable contrast with the blueness of the other, and the perspiration trickled down his cadaverous countenance in drops *almost* as large as horse-beans, and, for aught I know to the contrary, *quite* as cold as ice; in short, he was terror personified.

“ While I eyed poor Andrew with the greatest horror—for fear is very catching—the watchman, who had seen him pass the watch-house, and suspected from his appearance that something uncommon had taken place, which suspicions a peep in at the door had fully confirmed, communicated his ideas on the subject to those nearest to him, and the report having spread all over the station with the rapidity of lightning, long before the poor fellow had sufficiently recovered himself to utter one syllable respecting the cause of his fright, every person was as fully convinced he had seen ‘the gentry’ as if in possession of the particulars. Curiosity, therefore, got the better of all etiquette on the occasion, and my house was shortly taken by storm by a motley group, who, open-mouthed, open-eyed, and with fingers as stiff and as straight as the carbine ramrods of the station, regarded the terror-stricken orderly with countenances as fear-fraught as his own.

“ When I recovered from the surprise the melancholy appearance of the poor fellow had thrown me into, I ordered, as in O’Donnel’s case, the mountain panacea to be administered, the good effects of which exceeded my best wishes and expectations, as in a few minutes poor Andrew M’Neil recovered, in some degree, the use of his tongue; the first use he made of which was, most devoutly to return thanks to all the saints in the calendar for his happy deliverance, which act of devotion added not a little to the terrors already depicted on the countenances of those around him. The administration of a second dose of the ‘crathure’ followed the first, and he so far shook off his fears as to be enabled to relate pretty intelligibly

the following extraordinary account of what had occurred to him on his return from Port Turling.

“The orders it appeared had not arrived from the eastward till late, he had consequently been unable to leave Port Turling before dark. And here, in justice to the man let me observe, that men of stronger nerves than he possessed would, I feel assured, have felt a sensation far from agreeable on the occasion; for the two places were four miles asunder—he had nothing to direct him but a clew of white stones placed on sods at equal distances—an invention of mine to prevent accidents in fogs, and extending from one station to the other; his path skirted two bleak boggy mountains, crossed two glens—one in particular, called by the inhabitants the ‘granny,’ wild in the extreme—and then led over the top of a mountain about eight hundred feet above the level of the sea. Not a hut, even of the most wretched description, lay within miles of him on either side, and to add to all this, the night, as has already been mentioned, was so very foggy that he could scarcely distinguish the milk-quartz directing stones, although they were only five yards apart.

“Notwithstanding, however, the dreary walk he had before him, the attendant probabilities of encountering pookies on his journey, and of sounding the depth of every bog-hole in his route, he left Port Turling, according to his own statement—which, by-the-by, I very much doubted—no wise intimidated; and he had cleared one half of his journey with no other accident than an occasional fall, when, on descending the west side of the deep granny glen, he,



to his great surprise, found himself suddenly surrounded by numerous pale lights that appeared to dance around him. This occurrence, if it had no other effect, seemed in a great measure to have shifted his centre of gravity, for he immediately commenced floundering in his boatmate O'Donnel's best style, though his performance did not appear to have afforded similar amusement, for, with the exception of the splashing he himself made in the water, every thing around him was as silent as death.

“Thus accompanied by lights, and falling every minute, what with scrambling, crawling, and rolling, he contrived to reach the bottom of the glen, and had just crossed the little stream that ran through it, when to his utter amazement and dismay he found himself at the gate of a magnificent castle, which immediately flew open, and displayed a hall most brilliantly illuminated. Numerous servants, also, made their appearance most splendidly apparalled, who with one accord saluted him with ‘You are heartily welcome, Mr. O’Neil, to this castle of the “gentry;”’ and leading him forward to a large folding door, which likewise flew open at his approach, a sight presented itself that surpassed in magnificence any thing he had ever heard or thought of before.

“In a magnificent apartment, the sides of which shone with all the brilliancy of the noonday sun, and glittered with all the hues of the rainbow, and seated round a table that appeared to groan beneath the weight of the costly vessels of plate and delicious viands that covered it, he beheld a large party of ladies and gentlemen superbly attired, and surpassing

in beauty any he had ever beheld, and who were busily employed dispatching the good things before them, while they made the whole castle resound with the noise of their mirth. With them also, as with the grosser sons of clay, 'good meat' seemed to deserve 'good drink,' for he observed servants occupied in all directions in handing crystal vessels to the company, the contents of which sparkled like dew drops at sunrise on the purple bells of the heath blossoms, and were quaffed off by all with the greatest apparent delight. On his appearance, however, a general cessation of hostilities against both solids and liquids took place; the sounds of mirth suddenly subsided; the whole party rose and welcomed him in the most affectionate manner, while the domestics bowed most respectfully on all sides, and in an instant after the castle appeared to shake to its very foundation, with the shout of 'You're heartily welcome, Mr. Andrew M'Neil; come and partake of our cheer.'

"Thus welcomed by all, and observing nothing but joy and festivity around him, and the most evident expressions of good will towards himself, his terror, occasioned by the sudden appearance of the castle, gradually abated, but his astonishment at all he saw still so far got the better of his good manners, that he found himself totally unable to utter a single syllable in reply to the salutations that came from all quarters. While he thus stood endeavouring to stammer out something 'gentale' to the 'quality,' a gentleman who appeared of more consequence than the rest approached him, and in the kindest manner first welcomed him to the castle and then led him to a vacant

seat at the head of the table, a piece of condescension that M'Neil would most willingly have dispensed with, as, notwithstanding the good nature manifested by all, he felt himself far from being *at home* on the occasion, for he was well aware of the mischievous propensity of the 'gentry,' and had the greatest dread of partaking of their cheer, from an impression that is pretty general among the lower orders in Ireland—and, for aught I know to the contrary, elsewhere—that whoever partakes of fairy food becomes subject to their power seven years, and may consequently bid adieu to his earthly acquaintances during that period.

“He was, however, scarcely seated, before he found his prejudice against the good things around him rapidly giving way to the pressing solicitations of all around him, to which the savoury smell that regaled his olfactory nerves contributed not a little; and the wing of a goose (strange food for fairies, by-the-by) that was opportunely placed before him, so effectually completed what politeness and a good smell of 'kitchen' had already *sapped*, that in a few seconds he felt as irresistible an inclination to 'join the mess' of his new acquaintances, as he before did extreme horror at the bare thoughts of doing so. Without further ceremony, therefore, he was on the point of commencing hostilities in good earnest on the dainty morsel that lay before him, and the first mouthful that would have doomed him to a seven years' transportation, was on the point of entering his lips, when the castle suddenly appeared to rock to its very foundation, a noise resembling that of a whirlwind was heard, the folding-doors of the apartment, that

had closed on his entrance, violently flew open, and a middle-aged woman of prepossessing countenance, with her clothes tucked up towards her hips, and as completely covered with mud as if she had been drawn through the bog of 'Allen,' rushed in, and addressing poor Andrew M'Neil in an earnest and affectionate manner, exclaimed, 'Don't taste it, M'Neil.' She then turned to the party that had risen most respectfully at her entry, and added with an air of authority, 'I am come with the speed of the mountain's blast from the mountains of Donegal to this poor mortal's relief. He is harmless and well conducted; he has, also, a large family dependent on him for support. I therefore command you on no account to molest him, but let him go home to his family and children, who are anxiously awaiting his return.'

"The commands of the mud-covered dame had an immediate effect on all present, for M'Neil—to make use of a vulgar phrase—instantly dropped the dangerous morsel 'like a hot potato,' and his dread of fairyland became greater than ever. His companions, also, at the same time respectfully bowed obedience, and the gentleman who appeared master of the ceremonies advanced towards him, and taking him kindly by the hand said, 'I am sorry, Mr. M'Neil, we cannot have the pleasure of your company any longer, as we expected to have passed a merry night; and,' added he, as poor M'Neil was *backing* very willingly out of the chamber, 'I hope your boat-mate O'Donnell liked his ramble the other night. Pray be good enough to present Captain Green's compliments to Captain ——,' (would that Captain Green had been

first lord of the Admiralty, and clapt such a handle to my name,) 'and tell him, he hopes to have the pleasure of *his* company before many nights shall have passed.' The castle with its inmates then vanished in an instant, and Andrew M'Neil found himself in total darkness at the edge of the Granny stream, and with the greatest difficulty he contrived to finish the remainder of his journey, and finally reached my house in the miserable plight already described.

" Here his narration ended. The effects of it on his hearers, from its commencement to 'Captain Green's' invitation, had been to draw them into an extraordinary small compass, and, on the honour of an officer I assert, the door was not the point of attraction. No sooner, however, had he finished that part of the story that related to myself, than every eye that had hitherto been fixed on him was rivetted on me; and if, from the expression on every countenance, I had had any doubts as to the desperation of my case, those doubts must have given way, the moment he ended the recital of his adventures, before the general lamentation that arose at the bare thoughts of the melancholy catastrophe that was about to befall me. After the first burst of grief, real or pretended, had subsided, advice from all quarters flowed in most liberally on the momentous occasion. Every person present, with the exception of one or two stupid Englishmen, had some sovereign charm against the 'gentry,' that I was earnestly recommended to adopt. To be out after sunset was considered a crime little short of suicide, and was prohibited by all; that is to



say, if I had the slightest regard for my body or soul : and after having been treated to a general glance of commiseration, that said as plainly as a glance could say, ‘ You’re not long for this world, poor gentleman,’ I was left in quiet possession of my lately invaded apartment, with the above consolatory piece of intelligence.

“ With the first peep of dawn the following morning, that gossiping personage Dame Rumour, took the field—bog I should say!—in good earnest ; and, as I believe the good lady has never yet been accused of either want of diligence or inclination in enlarging on any subject she may have felt disposed to amuse herself with, it cannot be a matter of surprise that Mc’Neil’s adventures, with a few *trifling embellishments* ! should have travelled in a very short space of time, a most extraordinary distance in every direction from Portnacloy—that of the sea, for a pretty good reason ! alone excepted. One of the consequences attending the chatty lady’s activity was, that the opinions advanced the night before by my immediate neighbours respecting my approaching and inevitable departure for fairyland, received additional weight and importance from the concurrent opinions of all the aged persons in the neighbouring villages ; and so general was the belief that I was on the point of making my exit, that whenever I met any of the country people I was eyed by them with as much dread as if I had already had the burial-service read over me. Once or twice I saw, or *fancied* I saw, those I passed in the act of crossing themselves ; and, *certainly*, on one occasion, on feeling an unusual

weight in my coat-pocket, I was not a little surprised to find a half-pint bottle of holy water therein, that one of my domestics had deposited, either from a kind regard to myself, or through fear of losing a quarter's wages. In short, had I been either a nervous or a superstitious man, I feel assured the conduct of my neighbours would have either driven me over a cliff or into a boghole ; for which the poor ' gentry,' no doubt, would have been blamed, and my melancholy history would have been handed down to the ' Doghertys' and ' Gallaghers' of future ages, as a convincing proof of the existence of such beings, and the fatal consequences attending a disbelief of their power.

“ Fortunately, however, for my peace of mind—although, by-the-by, it spoiled a very marvellous story, that would have handed my name to posterity !—my nerves were none of the weakest, and of superstition I had little or none in my composition. The woful forebodings, and rueful countenances of my neighbours, therefore, afforded me amusement instead of uneasiness, and I should have treated the whole affair with the contempt I considered it merited, had not a report reached my ears, that, in my humble opinion, called for a different line of conduct. For a day or two after I had good reason to believe the dread of the ' gentry' was not confined to the country people, but had spread among many of my own men,—a circumstance not much to be wondered at, as they were chiefly of the same country, and originally of the same class, consequently, well acquainted with the legends of the former, and deeply imbued

with the prejudices of the latter. I had also observed a very evident dislike on the part of many at being out alone after dark; and I was shortly after informed, that one of them had actually hired a man to accompany him with orders from Port Turling to Portnacloy, through sheer dread of being caught alone on the mountains. I had no sooner received this latter piece of information, than I considered it absolutely necessary for the good of the service—the duties of which were principally confined to the night—to endeavour to crush such a feeling before it gained farther ground; and after some little consideration it appeared to me that the best method to effect my object was to accept *Captain Green's polite invitation*; and thus, by exposure of my generally believed ill-fated person, convince my men of the folly of entertaining such ridiculous notions.

“ I had no sooner conceived and digested my plan—which had for its laudable object the banishment of the mischievous ‘gentry,’ and the consequent right of all his majesty’s liege subjects in the neighbourhood to cross the mountains after dark, without let, hindrance, or molestation—than I resolved to put it into execution. The following day, therefore, I proceeded on a visit of inspection to Port Turling, carefully concealing my intentions from my neighbours and domestics, lest our parting, on the occasion, *should be too much for their feelings and mine!* On my arrival there I made the chief officer acquainted with my design; and, with the assistance of a good dinner, contrived—notwithstanding the *awful* undertaking before me—to pass the time very agreeably,

till night threw her sable mantle over the mountains, and gave me a gentle hint that it was time to proceed to business. I then armed myself with a *supernumerary warm tumbler* and a tuckstick, and left the snug cottage of my hospitable host, attended by the good wishes of himself and family, after they had vainly endeavoured to dissuade me from undertaking the dreary journey.

“Thanks to the clew of stones, already alluded to, I succeeded in skirting the two mountains that lay on my route, and crossed the first glen in *gallant* style, without meeting with any other mishap than an occasional plunge, that in a very short time made me, in one respect, a very suitable companion for M'Neil's mud-covered protectress. On my arrival, however, on the spot immediately over the ‘Granny,’ my acquaintance with bog became disagreeably familiar; and, for the first time since my departure I began to feel a little *queerish* on the occasion. My situation, indeed, was cheerless in the extreme. The deep, dark glen now lay beneath me, and the obscurity of the night kindly left my imagination to *stock* it with as many horrors and hobgoblins as I thought proper. The silence of death, also, reigned around me,—for my elevation placed me beyond the sound of the murmuring little stream beneath, and not a breath of wind swept the face of the mountain; while to add to the general gloominess, a dark and in appearance very *badly disposed* cloud mischievously placed itself over the glen, beneath which cloud appeared the black profiles of the surrounding mountains. In short, my prospect was confined to one or two con-

sumptive-looking stars, black sulky-looking clouds, and still blacker mountains—objects possessing no great charms for a lonely traveller on a pathless bog.

“Whether it were that my cheerless situation, coupled with Captain Green’s invitation, conspired to affect my nerves, or that the virtue of the hot tumbler had evaporated through all the tossing and tumbling I had undergone, I will not pretend to say ; but certain I am, as I have already observed, that I began to feel a little *queerish*. I felt inclined to admit, from a feeling that I could not account for, that there *might* be such beings as the ‘gentry ;’ and the pious Mr. Wesley’s argument in favour of ghosts, ‘that a man having never seen a murder committed, is no proof that murders never take place,’—now rushed very officiously, and I may say impertinently and unwelcomely, to my recollection. ‘Captain Green’s invitation—O’Donnel’s ramble—and M’Neil’s fairy castle were also viewed in quite a different light ; and my conduct and undertaking began to appear foolhardy and ridiculous in the extreme. In fact, I felt that, like ‘Bob Acres,’ in the comedy of the ‘Rivals,’ my courage was oozing through my fingers’ ends ; and the ‘gentry’ would have readily had my permission to retain their possessions, and amuse themselves at the expense of my neighbours, in exchange for a free and unmolested passage through the haunted glen, and an assurance that I should have been allowed to take peaceable possession of my *old moorings* at my fireside at Portnacloy.

“It was, however, now too late to retreat. So, *screwing* up resolution to the tightest pitch, I com-



menced my descent, and at the same time struck up 'Nancy Dawson,' though for what reason I know not, except that from the beauty of the air, and the natural sweetness of my voice, much improved by sixteen years bellowing against tempests in various parts of the world, I imagined that in keeping off intruders, it might answer the purpose of a clapper mill in a cherry-tree. Be this as it may, my descent had a marvellously strange effect on the strength of my lungs, and the consequent height of my voice; as the latter, unlike orderly and well-conducted quicksilver in a barometer, on such an occasion, fell rapidly as I decreased my elevation; and before I had got two-thirds of the way down the mountain, 'Nancy Dawson,' '*unknown'st* to me,' as we say in Connaught, gave place to 'Cease rude Boreas,' and 'The Galley Slave.' And these melancholy airs were given in a strain so tremulous and doleful, that they would have melted the heart of any well-disposed flint; and, indeed, forbidding as it looked, appeared to have a very sensible effect on the sulky-looking cloud already alluded to; for, after dropping a few tears, as if deeply affected by grief, it retreated slowly and sorrowfully towards the east, leaving a space, comparatively speaking, luminous, between its lower heavy, black edge, and the top of the mountain over which my road lay.

"Somewhat cheered by the bright prospect before me, I continued my descent, and had nearly reached the bottom of the glen, when I unfortunately tript over a 'tussock,' and, in my endeavours to save myself from falling, acquired, as a sailor would call

it, so much '*headway*,' that I lost all command of my legs, and eventually pitched head-foremost over the boggy bank that bordered the rivulet, and fell plump into a swamp near its edge. Not at all accommodated to my satisfaction, I, of course, lost no time in extricating myself; and in so doing had scarcely raised myself from the soft, but disagreeable bed, accident had condescendingly supplied me with, when I observed, with the greatest astonishment, what appeared to me to be pale lights, flying from me, as the centre, in every direction. My fall had already '*clapt a stopper*,' as we say at sea, on the 'Galley slave,' surprise now nearly did the same to my breath; and I remained on all-fours in the mud, anxiously expecting every moment to be favoured with the presence of the dreaded '*Captain Green*,' and his mischievous companions; and, not being one of the country, I had little to hope for or expect from the friendly interference of the *Donegal lady*. I remained, however, in this miserable plight only a short time, when, thanks to my prostrate situation, I was fortunately enabled to account very satisfactorily for the *phenomenon* before me, or rather around me; for on getting one of the '*pale lights*' between myself and the sky—an old manœuvre of smugglers at night—I had the indescribable satisfaction of observing a tolerably correct outline of that useful and harmless animal, called by Jack 'a woolly bird,' alias, a sheep; and as the feet of the said animal appeared to me to rest on the edge of the bank above me, I very naturally concluded the body of it was composed of earthly mutton, and that it was one of

a flock of sheep my sudden splash had alarmed. The mystery of the '*pale lights*' was now, in my opinion, cleared up, as I made no doubt the luminous appearance of their snowy fleeces—which here let me observe, I have frequently noticed in dark damp weather since!—contrasted with the black background, had deceived O'Donnel and M'Neil as well as myself. My fears, consequently, vanished in an instant, and I anticipated much pleasure from the hearty laugh that would be raised at the expense of my two *lions* on my reaching home.

“ With my '*steam*' once more *well up*—and I very much doubt whether half a dozen of my late host's hot tumblers would have created a greater elevation of spirits—I proceeded most manfully on my journey; and setting pookies and hobgoblins of all dimensions at utter defiance, and *chirping* 'Nancy Dawson' again, in a voice that would have broken the heart of a ballad-singer, I crossed the glen in as gallant style as I had done the first that lay on my route. Alas! my exultation was of very, very short duration! For on my reaching the foot of the opposite bank—and at the very identical spot where poor Andrew M'Neil had seen the *fairy castle*—I beheld a sight that instantly arrested my progress, or, in other words, '*brought me up all standing*.' Almost immediately over my head, in the bright space between the heavy cloud and mountain already alluded to, and apparently moving through the air with the greatest velocity in a direction to cross my path, I plainly distinguished the figures of what appeared to me to be a giant and an attendant dwarf. To add

to my horror, they seemed riding through the air on long poles, in the manner witches are represented on broomsticks; and my dismay was not a little increased, as may be easily imagined, when on appearing to gain a footing on the verge of the bank immediately over me, they suddenly converted their steeds into offensive weapons, and commenced thrusting in every direction beneath them, as if determined to oppose my passage.

“Thunderstruck at the sudden appearance and menacing attitude of the figures above me, *in that particular spot*, I at first endeavoured to persuade myself that what I saw was merely an optical deception, and, consequently, moved my head in every direction to get them in a different point of view. This experiment not answering my hopes and expectations, I next imagined they might be merely phantoms of my own imagination; and I therefore closed my eyes for a few seconds, hoping—with what good will I did so!—that on my opening them, I should see no more of the giant and his aid-de-camp. Here again I was disappointed; for on raising my eyelids, the ill-matched pair instantly appeared above me, thrusting their weapons more violently than before. This unprovoked appearance of hostility on their side, added considerably to my perplexity; and as a last resource, I covered my eyes with my hands, pressing forcibly on them at the same time; and while thus in darkness, using every means I could think of to convince myself that what I had just seen was nothing but an illusion; while I at the same time endeavoured to shame myself out of the idea by thus

politely addressing myself, ‘—— you ass! are you as big a fool as the rest?’ Moving my head, however, shutting my eyes, covering them, squeezing them nearly out of their sockets, these polite addresses, were all thrown away. In fact, my last experiments were more unsuccessful than my first; for on removing my hands, I found that fear had either given my eyes a multiplying power, or that a strong reinforcement of giants and dwarfs had arrived during the interval, as a legion of them now appeared on the brink of the bank, all thrusting their poles in admirable time and order; and what added still more to my amazement was, that while the giants appeared rapidly to increase in size, the dimensions of the dwarfs decreased as rapidly.

“This completely upset me. All doubts respecting ‘Captain Green’ and his companions now scampered off before this unexpected reinforcement, much quicker than the French did before the allies at the ‘heel of the hunt’ at Waterloo; and, as appearances promised me any thing but the hospitality and kindness experienced by M’Neil, my late-raised courage now rushed impetuously through every pore of my skin, like steam through the safety valve of a steam-engine, instead of oozing modestly through my finger-ends as during the ‘*pale light*’ adventure—fear very unceremoniously rushed in to fill the vacuum. I felt a sensation that I can only compare to that of being enveloped by cobwebs; and my hair, although it did not ‘*twine like a knot of serpents on my brow,*’ à la Byron, nearly occasioned the loss of my hat, by standing erect, ‘*like quills upon the fretful porcupine.*’



“ How long I should have remained breathless, open-mouthed, and open-eyed, straight-haired and straight-fingered, I will not take upon myself to say ; the chances are, however, daylight would have found me in that *enviable* situation, had not a change in the manœuvres of the gentlemen above, both large and small, brought the affair to a speedy termination. At times, thrusting their spears, or poles, downwards most hostilely, and at other times apparently floating in the air, and crossing each other like gnats—rather large ones though !—in the rays of a summer sun, they for some minutes continued hovering over the verge of the impending bank ; but at length, in appearance weary of merely acting on the defensive, and concluding—very justly too !—as I supposed, that I had no intention of *forcing a passage*, they commenced their descent, with the apparent intention of bringing me to action.

“ Now whether it were that at the approaching crisis pride fortunately came to my relief, attended by the recollection of my good grandmother’s advice, her favourite tortoise-shell coloured cat ‘ Spot,’ and her bright copper coal-scuttle already alluded to ; or that, like Ensign O’Dogherty—as humorously described in one of Blackwood’s Magazines—I ran headlong into the danger I wished to avoid, I am not quite positive ; in justice to myself, however, I must add, that as I drew my tuck-stick most manfully, and like a good general, prudently directed my attack against the *diminutive* division of my opponents, I am inclined to give myself some little credit ; more particularly as I have a confused recollection of having muttered

—in a very low and tremulous tone, I admit—  
 ‘Angels or devils, I’ll try what you are made of!’

“Be this as it may, hostilities no sooner appeared doubtful and *unavoidable* by the descent of my ill-matched opponents, than I drew my tuck, and, like one possessed, commenced scrambling up the face of the bank, in the direction of the division of dwarfs, which, in a most unaccountable manner, melted into one on my approach. Not at all displeased, as will readily be believed, at this phenomenon, I quickened my pace; and having succeeded in getting, as I thought, within arm’s length of the *consolidated legion*, I drew back my arm to try the effect of cold iron on the dwarfish figure before me, when a shriek of terror, so wild and shrill that it pierced the deepest recesses of the glen, was echoed on all sides by the surrounding mountains, thrilled through every nerve in my body, and went to my very heart, arrested my uplifted arm, and rivetted me breathless, motionless, and horror-stricken to the spot.”† \* \*

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† My friend made a full stop in his narrative, I suppose in order to let my imagination work upon all the horrible possibilities of his position, and I could not induce him to proceed; but I think I could gather from him afterwards, that as his servants at home did not find him return at his usual hour, they became alarmed, and this spread amongst the coast-guard and the villagers, and they immediately called to mind Captain Green’s kind wishes respecting him. Therefore, in hopes of finding his body, a general search was proposed, and the giant and the dwarf were two of the searchers, namely, his little servant-boy and his tall brother, who with long poles were searching amongst the tussocks for his cold remains. By accident, these two fell in with their master in the enchanted glen, and while the master was concealed from them

I asked Mr. Henri if there was much game in these wilds; he said not, the eagles and foxes were so numerous that they made sad havoc with the hares and grouse. This gave occasion to his mentioning some curious facts respecting the superstitious respect the women of the country have for foxes, and the desire they have, holding them to be intelligent but mischievous beings, to propitiate, and, if possible, turn their destructiveness from their doors. For this purpose, some of the housewives leave wool on the bushes in the winter season, which it is expected they will carry off to their burrows, and make themselves snug. Others actually knit little woollen stockings, or, as they call them, mittens, which they leave in the fox's path, expecting that reynard will wear them, when he roams at night in the hard weather, and, in gratitude for the comfort, leave untouched the cocks and hens.

He mentioned a ludicrous circumstance that had occurred some time ago, bearing upon this super-

in the bottom of the gully by the darkness of the night, they, standing on the bank above with a clear starry sky behind them, appeared as moving through the air; and the captain, thrown off his centre by the unexpected sight of such figures, their poles made admirable spears, and the multiplying power of fear easily enlisted recruits, and turned the boy and his tall brother, into legions of dwarfs and giants, which vanished on his mustering pluck enough to attack them. It was well he did not run away, or faint through fear, for if so, he no doubt would have been a staunch supporter of "the gentry" to his life's end. But as it turned out otherwise, (amongst the coast-guard at any rate,) there has been less credit given to the power of "the Phouca" ever since.

stitious respect of the people. Great depredations having been committed on the poultry belonging to the coast-guard families of Doonkeegan, the injured English, not so respectful, determined to stop the thief; so they baited a trap, formed for the occasion of a deal box, and sure enough, next morning, a red, sharp-nosed, broad-cheeked, bright-eyed little fellow was found occupying the interior, and vainly doing his best to get out; and very shortly it was noised abroad, through the nearest villages that the fox was caught, and the whole population poured forth to behold the mischief-maker; and, as might be supposed, to satisfy their revenge and their curiosity. Suppose, then, the trap brought out into an adjoining field, and amongst sundry groups surrounding it, one composed of elderly women, with their red petticoats, brown boddices, and the kerchief drawn tightly over the head.

“And is he there for *sartain*?—wurra, wurra, glory to God.”

“He’s there, (says another,) but I’m sure and *sartin* he’ll get off.”

“I wouldn’t put it past him, (says another,) he’ll then play the puck with all our young geese—if he do, he’ll never forgive this hand’s turn.”

“Oh, (says another,) he’s a dear dacent fox, he hasn’t the heart to do us mischief. No, he’s a clane, conscionable crathur—he’s content with hares, rabbits, and young sea-fowl. He’s not like that long stinking-tailed fox over the wather at Inver, that does be destroying all the poor people’s cocks and hens.

No, our fox never does the neighbours a hand's turn of harm — when the crathur is hungry, he goes from home, not like the grey thief at Inver."

In this way, under the confident assurance that the fox in the trap heard and understood, they used flattering words on the possibility that even yet he would escape from the hands of his captors. In the mean time the owner of the trap had been busy in procuring all the dogs in the vicinity to bait, worry, and kill reynard when let loose from durance, and fine sport was expected, and all was shouting, and barking, and great excitement, when, lo! the lid of the trap was lifted, and out bounced a trembling caitiff of a red cur-dog, certainly not unlike a fox, and whose grandfather or grandmother might have been of the vulpine race.

Having now crossed the high land dividing Portnacloy from that part of Broadhaven on which is the village of Doonkeegan, we came to a curious sort of burying-ground, called Kilgalligan, situated on a sandy eminence, which is liable to increase or diminish according to the prevalence of the wind; and, therefore, in process of time, as the surface has risen by the accumulation of sand, so also have the graves, until a sort of pyramid has been formed, that, at a distance, has a curious effect, with the head stones and small crosses covering on all sides its conical surface. There did not appear, upon the cursory view I took of this burying-ground, any vestiges of a church of any sort; but tradition goes that there was a cell here, in which resided a holy and lonely friar, named Galligan, who, to beguile his solitariness,



and to hold sweet counsel with another ascetic who resided far away over the dreary hills at Ballycastle, used to set out every Friday, whether in sunshine or in storm, to meet his brother, who also started at the same hour from his cell. They met at Belderig. As iron sharpens iron, so did the love of these holy friends, and they took sweet counsel together, and their spirits rejoiced in heartfelt edification; and then they returned, mutually supported and strengthened, to their lowly resting places. But it happened that the holy man at Doonkeegan in his latter days became blind, and still the piety of the people was watchful, and he had no lack of needful food; but never did he cease from his customary weekly excursion. Friday after Friday, for ten long years, the blind friar, with staff in hand, made his way along the accustomed track, over the bog and mountain, nor ever failed his friend until the time when he was summoned to his everlasting rest.

I spent the evening under the hospitable roof of my very intelligent friend, and we had some very interesting conversation on subjects connected both with time and eternity; and I was much pleased to find that he took a lively interest in the spiritual state of the different coast-guard stations along this, at times, inaccessible coast, where Protestant seamen are located with their families in places far from any sort of road, and where, from the high winds prevailing along these dangerous shores, there can be little or no communication by sea in winter between station and station. At these times my friend has acted the part of baptizer to the infant, catechist to

the young, and lecturer to the old—he is their surgeon, physician, and apothecary—their adviser, umpire, and justice of peace. Being, as officer, employed for the prevention of smuggling, whether on sea or land, he has had, of course, much to do in the way of detecting and destroying illicit distillation, and he told me some amusing anecdotes of the people's opinion of his superhuman power, and of the terrible *thing* he had that enabled him to see the distilling out of sight. By this they meant a good telescope he possessed, by means of which he could observe, from his well-chosen station, the smoke far away, curling up from some lonely ravine, or corrie, or ditch; or their carrying on horseback over the hills loads of whiskey or malt.

There was one circumstance that confirmed their opinion of his magic power. He was one day walking amongst the sand-hills in search of a hare, when he saw protruding from an eminence upon which a recent gale had so operated as to carry off much of its surface, the end of a large beam of foreign timber. He at once saw that this was secreted here for some improper purpose; so covering the timber up again, and marking the spot, he proceeded on his excursion, and said nothing of what he had observed. But shortly after this he was applied to for a search-warrant, by persons belonging to a vessel that was wrecked on the coast, in order to recover some of its cargo that had been carried off by night, and secreted by the country people. “Perhaps (says Mr. H.) I may be able to find it for you without much trouble.

In which direction was the timber stranded?" The place was accordingly pointed out to him. So taking up his large telescope, and directing it with great carefulness of adjustment towards different positions in the vicinity of the point where the timber came to shore, he at once, when levelling in the direction of the sand-hills, cried out, "I have it," and closing up his telescope, he said, "come *now*, follow me, and I will show you the timber." So walking off directly to the spot he had previously marked, he rooted with his stick, and soon uncovered the pine log. "Now, gentlemen, (says he,) here's one—need I take the trouble to go back and spy out the rest." "Och, then, yer honour need not be at that trouble, (says one of the common people present, endeavouring to make a virtue of necessity,) what's the use of consaling, when you have at home them what will see into the very ground? Sure there was no harm for us, poor crathurs, to take a few sticks that we thought belonged to nobody; but as there are now owners for them, why shouldn't they have them." So, without delay, every other log that was concealed through the sand-hills was uncovered, and the owners were allowed to bring them down without any obstruction to the shore.

Though employed, and that actively and usefully, in putting a stop to the mischievous manufacture of poteen whiskey, Mr. H. could find excuses for the people who were almost constrained to have recourse to it in consequence of the state of the country; for being forced to pay their rents in money, no matter how low that rent was, and there being no roads by

means of which they could bring their corn to market, they felt obliged to resort to the only method within their reach of making their corn portable, and that was, by converting it into whiskey, which, in a small space and on a horse's back, could be carried to where a price could be procured for it.

It certainly does not argue much *paternity* in a legislature to enact the strongest fiscal laws against a people, and tell them they shall be punished for what is not morally wrong, without affording them facilities to avoid the evil which is visited with punishment. In this way, it must be allowed, that the people of Ireland have been brought to hate the law, because it has been often unattended with moral sanctions, and because it too often said, "cease to do what we say is evil," without putting them in the way of "learning to do well." The landlords and the government ought to have made roads through Erris before the one said, you shall pay me your rent, or the other said, you shall respect my revenue regulations.

On the following morning I had arranged to set out from the hospitable home of my coast-guard friend, and for that purpose I had directed my jaunting-car driver to set out from Belmullet early in the morning, and wait for me at a certain bridge on the new road that has lately been opened between Belmullet and Ballycastle. Upon inspection of the map, it will be seen that this road runs in a valley at a distance of about ten miles from the sea-coast, which rises in a mountainous elevation of about a thousand feet in height, from which there is an inclined plane inland. Now, in coming from the sea-coast at Doon-

keegan to meet this road, I had, in the first instance, to skirt along the south-eastern shore of Broadhaven bay, then cross a ferry, then ascend the side of a mountain, then cross numerous glens, ravines, and moory elevations, and then an inclined plane of a bog, and that without the aid or accommodation of any road whatever. Now my good and kind host had accommodated me with a horse and a guide, saying at the same time, "You are welcome to take the horse the whole way to where you will meet your jaunting-car, provided you can get him across the ferry; but that I fear you will not be able to do, for the boat is not large enough, and in the present flooded state of the river, increased as it is by the outflowing tide, he never can be got to swim across; take, however, the bridle and saddle, and perhaps on the other side you can get some pony to hire, which will carry you on." With these good deeds, and with a warning, that was but too well fulfilled, that the day would be tremendously wet, I set out on my sad and unusual expedition, and it was well for me I had not foresight to apprehend *all* that I was to undergo.

Arriving at the ferry of Rosssduagh, there were, to be sure, a boat and a ferryman, but the boat was a small tub of a thing, totally unfit to receive the freight of a horse or even an ass, and I think I never saw so rapid a stream. No animal could be swam across; so taking my guide, my saddle and bridle, I committed myself to the care of as wild a Charon as could be imagined—a red-haired, blear-eyed, big-mouthed barbarian, who could not speak a word of English. Just as we had loosened from shore, a woman appeared on



the height above us, and signaled that she wanted to pass across, whereupon Charon backed his oars, and, without attempting to return to the shore, he held to in about two feet water, and in Irish informed the woman that if she wished to get across she must wade to the boat; accordingly, without making much ado, this short, sturdy, broad body of a middle-aged woman tucked up her garments as high as possible, and waded up to and strode over the gunwale of the boat. Whether she made any excuses to her modesty in Irish I am not prepared to say; I, of course, was looking out all this while seaward, observing the gulls with their white wings floating in the murky atmosphere, and contrasting their snow-flaked bosoms with the dark nimbus that came driving on from the south-west. So strong was the current, that it took two men with all their force to stem in twenty minutes a stream not two hundred yards across.

Landing on the other side, my guide went up the hill towards a village, to procure, if possible, a horse to hire. The bargain was to be made, the horse sought for and caught on the side of the mountain, and I, in the meantime, for two good hours, was condemned to wait under a bank at the side of the water, the rain coming down and the storm driving on, very much, it would appear, to the enjoyment of the gulls, gannets, and kittiwakes, that were careering and screaming all around, but very much to my discomfiture, as I contemplated a journey, perhaps on foot, across moor and mountain for ten miles.

At length when my patience had nearly all oozed out, my guide appeared, dragging a white shaggy creature,

hard to tell whether horse or ass, for it was very little larger than the latter; and if considerate, there ought to have been a doubt whether, in any difficult emergency, I should not rather have carried the pony instead of the pony carrying me. However, encouraged by my companion, who assured me, "he was better nor he looked," I allowed him to be caparisoned, and with my feet almost touching the ground, off I set, as curious an equestrian as ever the kingdom of Connaught exhibited. Our way at first was a merely practicable bridle-road, skirting the sides of the mountain that rises south of the ferry; we then, after going about a mile along the margin of the estuary, which in the map is laid down under the denomination of Strafodda Con, entered a glen, passed through a miserable village, and then through the farm-yard of a better sort of farmer, who seemed, though possessed of many out-houses, much fuel, and quantities of cattle, to live in the midst of dirt, meanness, and discomfort. We then began to ascend a mountain, which in the map is called Aghoos, and here all traces of a road vanished, and we had to struggle across as well as we might, and now I began to find the value of my guide. In all my life I never saw a man take such pains to accommodate another; never a man who brought such intelligence, activity, and alacrity to bear, to help on one who he knew was in a bad case.

In common seasons, and after a summer's drought, this mountain might be passable enough, for the bog was not more than from two to three feet thick, and underneath it a hard gravel. On this occasion, after a summer and autumn, wetter even than a common

winter, the whole surface was almost as soft as mud, and the pony, which belied his appearance very much, to my satisfaction showed all his powers of bog-trotting in hopping from tussock to tussock ; while I, sometimes riding, often walking, or rather leaping, and stepping, got on ; the guide in the mean time sounding before, and tracing with his staff the way I could take with more safety. In this way we worked away ; but at times, in spite of all our caution and the pony's agility and circumspection, down the little creature would sink up to his breast, and I had, on these occasions, to slide off my saddle as quickly as possible, over the creature's head ; then the poor little brute would collect his forces for a plunge, and with our aid, one pulling at his head and the other his tail, he would be extricated. And so we got on.

And now, having attained the summit of the hill, a long inclined plane of bog lay before me, through which a stream, drawing its sources from the gullies of the mountain, urged its tortuous way ; and into the bed of that stream, as the only footing across the bog, I had to ride ; and while the stream took its downward and shallow course along the mountain side it was practicable enough, and the sure-footed little animal picked its way with surprising safety ; but when we came to the flat where the streamlet became a river, by addition of multitudes of noisy torrents that, under the hourly increasing rain, came down dark and frothy, like Guinness's xx porter—when the river became a series of deep foam-covered pools, connected by rapid and stony fords—when I had, under the direction of my guide, now to cross this rapid, and then

that, turning my horse's head to every point of the compass—when at times the river became deep and still, and the sides high, I was obliged to alight and force the pony up the bank, and urge him, plunging and sinking in the bog—when, added to this, the heavens sent down not only torrents of rain, but sheets of lightning, the thunder meanwhile rattling amongst the mountains, and then losing its loudness amidst moanings that came from every gorge and glen—I really never was in such a position; wet from heel to middle with the waters of the river I had forded at least one hundred times—wet from the crown of the head to flank with torrents that came from above, and which no mackintosh could repel—there I was—I could have cried with apprehension and vexation. I believe I would have sat down and given over, satisfied that I could do no more or get no further, were it not for the courage and encouragement of my admirable guide, who told me that I was now but a short way from the high road, and that a few more fordings of the river and a few more plunges through the bog, would bring me out of my trouble.

Now that the affair is all over, and I can look back upon my moving accidents by flood and bog, I can fancy a picture of myself and all my accompaniments a fit group for a Cruikshank—my poor, long, lank, dripping self, the shadow of a half-drowned Dr. Syntax—my mackintosh torn from nape to skirt, and flapping in the driving gale—cheeks sunk and sallow, nose blue, mouth half open to show a set of chattering teeth, hands so livid with cold as scarcely able to hold a rein—a cudgel in my weak grasp with

which, ere cold mastered me, I would belabour the sides of my over-cautious nag—beside me, the said nag, once white, but now coated to the ears with bog mud, and sunk up to the chest in the mire, its nose resting on a tussock, my guide, ruddy with exercise, his health and strength beyond the power of storm, now tugging first at his head, and then pulling at his tail—beside us the roaring river, carrying down on its turbulent surface masses of bog stuff, and roots of bog fir—every now and then a fitful flash of lightning, and then an additional torrent of rain—all this, Mr. Cruikshank, I beg you will draw in your best manner, and style your picture, “C. O.’s Exodus from Erris.”

But I was not yet out of my troubles, for though my guide, when I was almost reduced to my last hope, and my physical powers at their lowest ebb, pointed out the bridge towards which I was tending, looming through the mist, yet when I saw no jaunting-car in waiting, my apprehensions were all alive, and I made my last plunge into the river, and forded the last shallow, full of terror lest my driver should have deserted me in this desolate spot. Well now I am at last on a road, a beautiful new road, and there is a bridge spanning the river, and there are three cabins adjoining; but not a human being appears—the pelting storm has driven all to their smoky fire-sides, and, positively, there is no sign of the jaunting-car, and here I am deserted, without a dry stitch from head to foot, and no means of obtaining a change of dress—what shall I do?—not a human being in these three cabins speaks a word of English. The guide, by my direction, inquires did any one see a jaunting-car



pass in the course of the morning?—All say no, except an old man who stated that about breakfast-time (that was about five hours ago) he saw a car at the bridge, but which way it was going, whether towards Belmullet, or eastwards, he could not tell. Well now, what was I to do? To go back the way I came was impossible—return to Belmullet—why do that, when in all likelihood my driver, a boy of fourteen years of age, would, more probably, choose to make his way homewards.

“I think, sir, (says the guide,) you had better get onwards, there is a coast-guard station at Belderig, about ten miles onwards, I can get you a comfortable night’s lodging there, and I can also stop with the pony, and make my way home to-morrow.”

To this proposal I acceded, and was encouraged in the resolution by looking closely at the track of the jaunting-car and horse on the road, which, though in a great measure obliterated by the strength of the rain, yet here and there showed the shoe-track as proceeding onwards. So giving my young friend the pony to ride, I set out running to put warmth into my shivering frame, and this exercise was invaluable to me—in half an hour I was as warm and as limber as I need be, and I have to thank a good Providence that, at my advanced period of life, I had energy and activity to run for an hour in this way, the pony keeping up to me in a jog-trot.

We now neared another bridge, and through the driving rain I thought I saw something black—it might be a turf-car—it might be my jaunting-car. In a few moments it became joyfully certain that it

was the latter, and upon expostulating with my young rascal of a driver for neglecting my orders, and deserting me, his reply was, that he waited for some hours, that he could get no shelter for himself or horse, that he could bear the storm and rain no longer, and that he came on here where he could get shelter, under the supposition that I also, when I found he had gone on, would follow him. And now I am under shelter, in a small cabin, a sort of public or shebeen house, where you can be refreshed with whiskey!!! The apartment was small, and there was a great fire on the hearth, from which the smoke floated in volumes all around, and if you don't keep your head low down near the floor, you will be suffocated. This room was as full as it almost could hold. There was my jaunting-car horse, and an ass, and a calf, and a pig, and a goat, and four or five way-faring men, taking shelter, and watching for a clear moment to proceed to Belmullet; and there was a child squalling in a box which an old woman was rocking; and an old man sitting in the chimney corner; and the woman of the house bustling about, wiping a stool for me to sit down, scolding the boys to get out of the way, kicking the pig, driving out the goats, and doing all she could, in her Irish way and language, to be civil to the gentleman. In this every one seems to take a part; one holds my shoes to dry, another my stockings, in the mean time I retired behind a turf-kish, extracted from my carpet bag dry clothes, and made myself as comfortable as the heat of the apartment would allow me.

And now to supply another want. Eight hours of

such trouble as I had gone through must have generated in a healthy man no small appetite. I know there are potatoes, I am sure there is whiskey, maybe there are eggs, perhaps butter—I'll have a dinner in no time. Commend me to a Connaught woman for boiling potatoes. In a quarter of an hour I had the murphys beautifully bursting from their skins, fresh eggs, butter to be sure not very temptatious. Who cares for a table-cloth, or an egg-cup? I confess that on the 15th of last September I had not gone to Father Mathew—I wore no temperance medal, and I had suffered so much, the storm still blew, the rain was driving, and I had twenty miles to go; here's for a tumbler, a hot tumbler of punch—I don't ask questions whether it be parliament or poteen—who would refuse it to me after such moving accidents by bog and stream. I'll take it for my stomach's sake, even suppose the priest was by to frown me into purgatory.

It was not likely that in the presence of so many good-humoured, pleasant, accommodating people, I would eat alone or drink alone. No, the potato-pot was ample, and so was the black bottle—but with that, gentle reader, I do assure you there was temperance, if not teetotalism; and eating as I did, and, to a certain extent, drinking with these poor people, I never enjoyed a repast more, never was amongst people more good-natured and yet humble, and whose conversation, as far as I could interpret it through the means of my guide, who acted as dragoman, was more full of intelligence, good-humour, good-nature, and *savoir faire*.

Parting with my excellent guide, who, I believe,

staid with my enduring pony for that night in the shelter of the public-house, I proceeded on my jaunting-car onwards, intending to reach Ballycastle. I can give no adequate description of this journey of twenty miles ; the first part of which was through a dreary bog glen, along which the still unmitigated rain poured from the west, shutting out every distant view, and rendering what was near indistinct and desolate in the extreme. Towards sun-setting the clouds began to disperse, so as by the time I had passed Belderig and approached the sea-coast, I had occasionally peeps of grand cliffs and bold headlands ; for this is, no doubt, the grandest cliff coast (extending from Downpatrick Head to Erris Point) in Ireland. But now the dusk came on, the clouds still hung on the highlands, an indistinct haze obscured even what the departing light might otherwise have at times allowed me to observe, and the remainder of the journey to Ballycastle was slow and full of apprehension ; for the latter part of the road was extremely rough and bad, the bridges in some places dangerous ; more than one ford was so deep with the turbulent stream roaring and foaming from the hills, that I was warned by the foot passengers I met to be on my guard. On this occasion I met with what I consider as very rare in Ireland, an instance of avaricious selfishness and desire to make money *out of you*.

There is a considerable stream of water crossing the road without any bridge, about two miles westward of Ballycastle ; it comes from large glens in the interior, and though the ford is generally shallow and to be crossed by foot passengers on stepping-stones,

yet occasionally it rises after rain to be a foaming torrent, whose subsidence is almost as rapid as its rise. Aware of this ford, I happened to meet a respectable man on horseback proceeding westward, and, on accosting him, I found that he had been at the market of Ballycastle, and that he had with great difficulty crossed the ford, being obliged to take a man wading on before him to lead his horse, the water meanwhile being up to the beast's breast; but he said that the flood was evidently subsiding, and that by the time I reached it, it might be quite passable for a car; "and I'll tell you," says he, "how you will know. Look out for the stepping-stones; if you see them uncovered, then you may drive on; but if the water be over them, then some one must strip and lead the horse; and you, unless you are content to stop somewhere for the night at this side of the ford, must expect a good wetting, even suppose nothing worse should happen."

You may suppose with what fear and trembling I approached the ford; the rain had ceased for two hours; the night, though dark, was clear, and, in order to give more time for the water to subside, I made the driver get on slowly. At length, from the dip of the road, and from other signs, I knew I was approaching the river; and just at this spot I heard the voices of men upon the road, and stopping, I accosted them and asked as to the practicability of the ford; whereupon one man stepped up to my side of the car and said in a sort of alarmed tone, that the water was very high—that it was extremely dangerous for a stranger who did not know the place to venture



to cross—that he knew the ford as well as any man alive, and why shouldn't he, seeing as how he lived convenient, and that he would come with my honour and pass me safe over. Quite delighted at the lucky meeting, I replied, "come along, my good fellow." So on we went for about a hundred yards, when the man suddenly took the horse by the rein, stopped the car, and, just as we were in sight of the ford, said, "And what will your honour give me for bringing yees across?" This was so unusual a proceeding on the part of the man, for in general the people, when you make use of their services, *lave it to your honour*, that I suspected a trick. I therefore bounced off the car, approached the edge of the water, and could plainly see the whole line of stepping-stones; I therefore knew that the pass was practicable, and that I might drive on. So, coming back, I said to the fellow—

"Well now, I see the stream is broad, and there may be danger in passing; so, my honest fellow, what will you take to strip and lead the horse across?"

"Why, your honour would not be after giving me less than a two and sixpenny, seeing as how I'll have to come back again."

"Oh, you're all out too dear, friend," I said; and with that taking the reins and whip out of the driver's hand I lashed the horse into the water, kept along parallel with the stepping-stones—let the horse get on at his leisure, and without the water getting at any time above the footboard of the car, I got safely to the other side, not without hearing some pretty

strong Irish curses from the fellow who had overreached himself in driving a bargain.

About ten o'clock I got to Ballycastle, where with a very worthy man, with whom I had scraped acquaintance in May last, when I attempted to reach Erris, I got every accommodation I had reason to expect—a good dinner, a good glass of wine, an excellent bed, and every possible attention.

## CHAPTER VII.

Another Venture on Erris—Approach to Killala—A Fair—The Fair Sex's Fair—An Evening's Walk—A Guide—A Peculiar Building Material—The "Gentry" and their eyes—A Charmed Churning—A Beggar's Blessing—A Friar's Luck—Moyne Abbey—Fine Position—Religious Difference in the Grave—A Charitable Lady—A Pious Chief—An Uneasy Home, and Ejection without the Sheriff—A Confessional—Too Much Knowledge—A Bold Bet—A Skull's Ghost—A Wager Won—A Riddance without a Benefit—A Daughter as Dutiful as Beautiful—A Natural Curiosity—Round Tower—Has a Good Escape of the Ecclesiastical Board—Episcopal Good Taste—An Old Title Deed—A Holy Well—A Talk about Bishops—A Good Protestant and Good Roman Catholic Prelate—Legend—Truth versus Tradition—Rebellion of 1798—An Old Cave—Druidical Couches—A Singular Geological Formation.

IN my last chapter I gave an account of all I could gather by eye and ear during my excursion to Erris. It has been said, and I am not sure of the why or wherefore; that he who goes into Erris once will certainly go there again. The reader may judge whether *I* had reason to make the second venture; but so it was, I certainly did set my face towards "the lovely land" a second time, and the following chapters are the result of my enterprise.

I entered Mayo from the county of Sligo at Balina, but of that town and its vicinity I do not mean *now* to speak, though there is much of noticeable matter there; for, if spared, and not anticipated by some more expert tour-writer, such as Mrs. Hall and her *not* better half, I mean to venture on another

volume on North Western Connaught. I, therefore, shall begin with Killala, which I approached on a fine summer's evening, and the sight pleased me much : green hills, with intervening flats of rich pasture and meadow land, meet your eye : there is some timber and no bog. You get frequent peeps of the bay, which to the north-east is locked in by picturesque sand-hills, on which the western sun was sparkling ; and these hills by overlapping, shut out the view of the harbour's mouth, and so the bay looked like a circular and placid lake. About a mile on the Bal-lina side of the town, and just on the border of the bay is Moyne Abbey. Nothing of it is visible from the road but the slender square tower, perhaps the loftiest and prettiest in Ireland. In front is the town on an eminence, with its church, steeple, and its conically capped round tower. Almost on every eminence in the vicinity is a circular rath, of more than the usual height and dimensions—altogether, I have seldom neared a Connaught town that looked so well. To be sure when you enter, things are not so satisfactory ; but, after all, though a poor unbusiness-like place, what with the bishop's palace and its trees, the church, the round tower, the sheltered bay, the encircling green hill, all give it respectability and create interest ; and I believe I would like to live there if I was content to eat, drink, and be quiet. No doubt I saw it to advantage ; the weather was dry, the evening sunny, a fair was going on, the cattle business all over, and the humours of such a concern were just beginning—rows of booths were ranged on either side of the street, and flauntingly dressed

females were either busy making purchases, or chatting and laughing in groups.

I love to look on at a fair, it delights my heart to witness the cordial meetings and greetings of the kind-hearted people, to see the hearty kiss given, to hear the noisy laugh passed round. I wish I had the art of fixing on canvass this or that most picturesque group, when I could pourtray not only the round and jocund faces—blessings on them—of my countrywomen, but also the rich contrasts of colour in the costumes, which I wish they would not change—the scarlet mantle, the madder red petticoat with its many plaits, the brown boddice, the yellow kerchief, the sky blue stockings. Talk not to me of Swiss or German costumes, rather give me a Connaught lass attired as I have just said, with her fair skin, her ruddy cheek, her mirthful black eye, and her white teeth almost sparkling from her half opened, good natured, and large mouth. She is no beauty to be sure—her head and form are Celtic, and not Grecian; but there she stands before a tent, a kind laughter-loving amiable *crathur*. I see her there coquetting most intensely, with Pat on one side, and he's a clean, comely, broad shouldered, light limbed, springy fellow; he could run to Sligo and never draw breath; he could hurl or fight till the cows came home. On the other side of her is a sailor in his many buttoned and well-fitting blue jacket; he wears a white dimity waistcoat and a red bandana tied carefully careless about his neck; he is a specimen of manly vigour, a little weather beaten to be sure. Sally, the deceiver, is dividing her smiles and pleasantries between her



two admirers ; an old wrinkled body (Sally's aunt no doubt,) is standing behind—she is watching the lively colleen ; she would rather that Sally was not so particular with Jack tar ; Paddy with his bit of ground and his dacent cabin would do better for her. Such groups you may jot down in your sketch book at a fair in Killala. With such groups I occupied my eye and amused my mind while walking up to the inn where I was to get my night's lodging. Of this entertaining place I am not desirous to say much—much ought not to be expected where there is no thoroughfare, and where mine host only consents to accommodate the public as a secondary consideration, made subservient to his more important functions of baker and shopkeeper.

Having a fine evening at command, I procured an idler, who, for the sake of a shilling, was content to forego the humours of the fair, and to accompany me in a walk to Moyne Abbey. So off we set, and bustled through the fair, through which I passed quite unnoticed ; had I walked through the unbusiness-like town at any other time, all eyes would have been on the stranger, and all mouths open to ask who is *he*? but now, all parties were so engaged in their own *cosherings* that the stranger was not regarded.

Taking a direction eastwards through some very fertile fields, and then along the border of the bay, I came upon a great quarry, where I had the opportunity to observe the beautiful and very useful stone peculiar to this vicinity, for in no other part of Ireland is it to be found ; it is a calcareous formation of the oolite or roestone character, of considerable hard-

ness and great unity of structure; it takes a polish as fine as marble; it rings when struck like metal; it is quite unchangeable by weather, and can be raised in blocks of any size, infinitely harder, and more compact than the oolites of England or France, as raised at Bath, the Island of Portland, or in the Paris district: its perfect indestructibility is evidenced in the Round Tower of Killala, which has stood for twelve centuries at least, bearing the storms and spray driving against it from the Atlantic Ocean, and there it stands, as sound and fresh, except where scathed by lightning, as when the mason made his finish to the mysterious building. Moyne Abbey also, to which I am going, is built of the same material, and there the architectural ornaments are as angular and as sharp as the day they came from the chisel of the stone-cutter.

Proceeding onwards we came to a beautiful pasture field, on which many cows were feeding; this gave me occasion to remark on the productiveness of dairy husbandry, whereupon my companion observed that it was all very well if the sheogues did not do the owner a bad turn, for then it would have been well for him if he had never meddled with butter making.

“What do you mean?” said I; “who are the sheogues?”

“Why, *plase yer honour*, what else would I *mane* but ‘the gentry,’ for can’t they, or those who have to do wid the likes of them, stop when they *plase* all the butther in a dairy? you churn away till Tibb’s eve

and not a taste ; no, not the bigness of a cherry stone will gother in the churn."

" Well, now," says I, " did you ever know this to happen ?"

" Och, then, it's I that did. Sure it happened to my own mother, rest be to her sowl. She had two as kind crathurs of cows as any in Tyrawly, and as fine a pasture for them as ever crow flew over, and it was the plentiful month of June when there was grass *galore*, and when, if nothing was *unnathral*, the tub would soon have its fill of butther ; but, as it was, mother churned and churned, and not a taste would come to the top but froth, the milk would crack, the butter would always appear as just a coming, but there it would stop. So do ye see me, one day as the whole house were kilt working at the dash one after another, in comes an ould beggarman. ' God save all here,' says the dacent spoken crathur. ' Sure you'll give for the love of Mary a bit of fresh butther off the churn, which I'm tould is good for a pain I have about my heart that is afther killing me intirely.' ' Why, thin, honest man,' ses my mother,—for the heavens be her bed, she was always kind to the poor, and she had the prayers of many who went away warm and full from her door,—' it's I that would give you the full of your fist of butther, with all the veins in my heart, if it was for you, but here we are the whole morning working away until we are down-right kilt, and not a *taste* the size of a nut can we gother.' So with that, out went the old man, and the churning had to be given up for that day at any rate. Well, about a week after, mother took heart

again, and away the whole house churned, but with no better luck ; and just as they were in the middle of the trouble, in comes the same beggarman again, and says, ' Well, mistress, any bettther forthen the day ? ' ' None in life,' says mother ; ' the thing's not nathral. I see,' says she, ' an evil eye is on me and mine, God help me.' ' Well, mistress,' ses the ould man, ' more's the pity that any thing unlucky should come over you or yours, for you were always good to the poor, and you ought to have their blessing attending you, and if this be from an evil eye, with the help of Heaven I'll show you how you will get over it. Lave over the churning this day, it's no use in life ; but Monday come eight days, begin again, and ye won't be after churning long till an ould woman will come and sit down, and begin to converse very neighbourly, and by-and-by she'll offer to take a hand at the churn-dash, and then she'll wish you a good morning and go about her business. Now mind you me, do you take the dash in hand, and just as the woman is stepping over the threshold, plunge the dash down to the bottom of the churn and keep it there, and then see what'll happen.' You may be right sure mother minded what the man tould her ; and sure enough the ould woman came in on the churning day, and by-and-by took a turn at the dash and then went out ; but if she did, the dash was kept at the bottom of the churn while she was crossing the door, and as I'm a sinner, from that day forth my mother had as good a run of butther from her milk as any woman in Tyrawly. Maybe yer honour doesn't believe this (for he saw me smile) :

why then, as I'm a Christhen, it's as thrue as you're there;' but if what I've tould you won't make you *sin-sible*, I'm in hopes what I'm now going to tell ye, will. I knew a friar some twenty years ago,—Heaven be your home now, Father Hennessy, for yer riverince was a holy man entirely ;—well, he was returning one morning from where he had gone, as was his way, in troth, every morning, to a high place forenint his house, to pray there, and to go through his *intentions* ; and an ould church yard he had to pass, where they do bury children that die before they be christened, and there he saw an ould woman creeping along the long wet grass that grew rank over the little graves, and she was gothering all the butthercups and putting them in the praskeen (or apron) before her. So, says the friar, 'Bright morning to ye, honest woman, and will ye give me a share of your gothering?' 'That I will,' says the hag, 'since ye ask it civilly, and much good may it do ye, and maybe when you go home you won't be sorry.' So home goes the clargy, and if he did he found his niece just done churning. 'Och then, uncle sir,' says she, 'come and look at our great luck this morning, the churn is as full of butther as it will hould.' So with that the holy man smelt a rat ; he saw it was the hag of the church-yard's doings. So, sis he, 'Biddy jewel, don't for yer life use that butther ; it's not nathral ; it's not sent in grace, nor is it lucky. No, give it me.' So with that, he orders all the butther to be taken off the churn, and he has it taken out of the house and put into a dirty herring hogshead, and he calls for a coal of fire, and he with dry turf soon makes a blaze



about the barrel, and then he kneels down, says a Latin prayer, cuts the sign of the cross betune him and the vessel, and behold ye, in a hand's turn, the barrel, instead of houlding butther, was full of ugly crawling things called doulduffs.\* You may suppose, sir, the barrel was let to burn away."

With this kind of conversation, we beguiled our way until we arrived at Moyne Abbey, which is certainly finely situated on a fertile slope, that reaches down in all its rich verdure to the sea shore, and through which a clear babbling stream runs, passing under the inclosure of the abbey, supplying it with the purest water; and then, after urging its way through what were once plentiful fish-ponds and after forming a mill pond it tumbles into the bay, which here protected from all winds, offers a safe harbour for boats, and where the monks in old times could unlade in perfect security, the produce of the several granges which they owned along the river Moy and the sea coast. I think I never saw a more eligible or beautiful site for a monastery; and surrounded by its fertile parks, its walls casting their massive shadows over the placid bay; its lofty and slender tower sending its solemn vesper summons over land and sea, it must have been a noble religious establishment when peace was within its walls, and pensive contemplation within its cloisters. Even now it is a most interesting and beauteous ruin. The massive whole so picturesquely defined by the lights and shades of its

\* Irish name for a black coleopterous insect, which is held in great horror by the people, and always killed when possible. *Black devil* is the English of the name.

numerous angles, its multitude of pointed gables, its many ivy mantled chimneys, its particularly lofty and slender tower, springing with a lightness and elegance of construction (I have seldom seen surpassed) from the arches leading to the choir; all this makes Moyne what an architectural painter might delight in transferring to his canvass, with all its landscape accompaniments; and it is the sight of such places, and the sense of my own utter incapacity in delineating them that makes me mourn over my ill-directed education. Why not make drawing the *sine qua non* of a gentleman's education to fit him for his future walk through life?

The elevation of the Abbey Tower here was made purposely great to obviate the inconvenience of its low situation, and to enable the watcher to see afar off, who and what were approaching the sacred edifice. The building, composed as it is, of the durable oolite I have just spoken of, has permitted time to encroach but little on its walls, but the hands of the original devastators, and the year after year dilapidations perpetrated by those who enter their friends within, have made it like most other Irish abbeys similarly used—an ugly and disgusting scene. Bones, skulls, and pieces of broken coffins, the remnants of those who are disinterred, to make room for fresh occupants, lie in revolting disorder all around. Still there is a door to this abbey, but it seems to open to all that please to enter. From what I could gather from my companion there are distinct places of sepulture for the Roman Catholics and Protestants. The following anecdote was narrated as bearing upon the fact :—

“ Mary B— was the wife of Sir R. P—, and if ever there was a good woman in the world she was *wan*, some people say it was her that purtended to long for the good woman’s bit (a portion of the gristly part at the shoulder blade), and got her husband to have so many fat cows kilt for her to get a meal of that part every day. But that was all holy chate—for her purpose was that all the offals and coarse parts might be given to the poor. But sure they could afford it, hadn’t the good man all as one as a quarter of the county, at any rate of the barony. Well, *wan* time, their big house took fire, and every part of id was burnt down, barrin’ where the lady kep the blankets and clo’es for the poor. But in spite of all her goodness, as heaven was ready for the likes of her, she took sick and died one day—she was a Catholic by coorse, but her husband was a Protestan’—and what would the black-mouthed Cromwellians say if she was not buried afther their manner. So Sir R—to keep his own sort in good humour and do the thing grandly, had in the broad day, a mighty great berrin entirely, and he filled a coffin full of stones, and put it down with the parson standing over it—here in the Protestan’ part of Moyne—and then he brought her *ræle* corpse by night to Straid Abbey.\* So the Friars

\* Straid Abbey is on the Moy in the barony of Gallen. I have not seen it. Archdall, quoting Pocock’s Journal, says that the church was singularly beautiful, and adorned with many Gothic ornaments. In the centre of the altar is a Virgin and child, of excellent workmanship; there is also a tomb, on which are rich bas reliefs of four Kings, and of St. Peter and St. Paul. In 1434 the Pope enriched the monastery with numerous indulgences.

were all on their knees, when behould ye, all the bells of the steeple began to ring with might and main of their own accord. Well, the clergy ris in a fright till they heard she was coming to be buried, and then they knew as how it was a miracle; so she was really buried in Straid, the heavens be her bed as it surely is this night." I know not what foundation there is (if any) for this story. I repeat it to show how the people feel and think on these matters.

This religious house, founded for the Franciscans of the strict observance, was in great repute and prosperity, and it would appear that it remained longer in the unmolested possession of its inmates than the religious houses in the eastern part of the kingdom, and even after it *was* suppressed and its property consigned to some Government favourite, the friars lingered about their beloved cloisters, and were permitted in sufferance to dwell therein. In these latter days, as my companion informed me, a man who had made some money in a way that was not praiseworthy, and who, as he made it without heaven's fear, desired to increase his store without its blessing—seeing the richness of the surrounding land, and the strength of these old walls, took a lease of the place, and set about to turn the refectory, dormitories, kitchens, &c. &c. of the Franciscans into a dwelling. "He was a Protestan' by coorse;" and having thus fitted it up, hither he removed with his family. So he and they were all mighty proud and happy entirely while the day lasted, but when they lay down to rest at night, not a wink of sleep could their eyelids get; for just as their eyes were closing and their minds falling into

forgetfulness, moanings as of those in agony, wailings as of those in despair, would arouse them, and all the livelong night they had to listen to what murdered sleep: all this to be sure, was by the stern head of the family attributed to fancy, misapplying the hooting of the owl from the ivy-mantled chimneys, or the sighing of the sea as the night wind swept over its rising tide; but another night came, and still no rest, and then another. Still the avaricious man was obstinate: why in spite of man or devil should he not as the owner of the place, dwell in what he had made his own? But this could not last—unmitigated watchfulness produced madness—the man himself, before a week expired, became a maniac, and he and his people removed from the sacred edifice, and left it to repose ever since in its own undisturbed solitude: better to remain a ruin (so said the people) than to suffer the daily defilement of a heathen and a publican.

Proceeding to ascend the tower of the Abbey that springs with such light elegance from the arched nave under which you enter into the choir, my guide pointed to a small closet constructed elaborately of smooth and accurately jointed stone, with a hole on each side, by means of which a person sitting within might hear persons addressing him from without—this was the Confessional—well was it adapted for the purpose—right was it that the being whose duty it was to sit inside should be cased in stone—for to such surrounding hardness should he assimilate his heart, who was doomed to listen to all the varieties of crime, and error, and folly that should be poured into



his ear. Oh! how horrible it would be (if sympathy could long bear it) to be day after day the depository of all that makes social life so unhappy, of all that makes the child of fallen Adam so mischievous, without the power of reposing in one helping advising bosom the dreadful facts with which the mind is full even to bursting. But sympathy cannot last long with the confessor—as with the medical, so must it be with the religious practitioner—the feelings must be blunted—callosities must incrust the finer sensations; yes, as with the doctor, so with the priest, while appearing to feel with all, they in fact feel for none. I thank Providence I am not a Roman confessor. I would consider the power such a person undoubtedly possesses dearly earned, indeed, by having such horrible knowledge accumulated upon me (and here I speak of the matter in a worldly and prudential point of view, leaving the divine authority of auricular confession quite out of the question); I would fear that such knowledge would make *me* stern, hard, tyrannical, contemptuous. I conceive that such knowledge is too wonderful for *any* man, and he only should have it who is all good as well as all knowing.

Having viewed all that I thought was likely to interest me in this fine ruin, I was proceeding in company with my guide to take my departure, when on lifting up a skull somewhat remarkable for the bumps developed on its surface, and which of course would have been a good subject in the hands of a phrenological lecturer, and as in this respect valuable, and likely to be abstracted by some curious person, I

asked were the people disposed to come near the Abbey by night?

“Och then, yer honour, there’s not a man in the barony, no not his riverance the priest himself would come here in the dark, for there be the terriblest noises by night here, that ever mortal man heard: people in the broad day, and when they can afford, as I may say, to be stout, tell you that it’s only the owls and wild cats; but them that knows it, hould out for it that it’s one of the ancient friars. I’m sure myself forgets his name, though I once heard it. But he broke his vow, sold his soul to the devil, and in the midst of his divilry was drowned crossing the river Moy. Any how the noises are heard as sure as any thing. And now as we’re leaving the place, I’ll tell yer honour a story as thrue as you’re there:—

“Not many years ago there was a set of jolly boys one night drinking and carousing in Killala, and amongst the rest was Peter Cumming, the chapel clerk. Now, when they were all pretty well I thank you, they all got valiant intirely, and one said he wouldn’t be afeard to do *this*, and another swore he had done, and would again do *that*. “I’ll tell ye what I’ll do,” says Peter; “I’ll bet any one a golden guinea, and here it is under my hand on the table, that I’ll go this very hour to Moyne Abbey and bring here a skull out of it in my pocket handkerchief, and lay it down on this table.” So all thinking it was an impossible thing,—that no man alive would dare to go for to do such a thing,—to put an end to Peter’s brag, sure and certain it was only boasting he was, they all said done to the wager; and Peter’s golden guinea

was covered in a moment with twenty-one white shillings. So Peter for his courage sake and the money, and besides having the spirits in him, sets off for the Abbey—and troth I don't envy the scape-grace as he went whistling along, putting out of him the wind, as a body may say, to give the more room for his courage. And now my joker gets near the place, and he sees the tower lifting its tall self and cutting on the blue sky, and one star bright entirely is sparkling like a cat's green eye, just over yonder pinnacle where the sea eagle now and then comes and sits (by-the-by there is a story about that). Still Peter's bravery was not put aback—there was as yet no occasion—all was silent in the air, on the land and out at sea, except now and then the dash of the swelling tide as the easy wave came in, and shattered in foam amongst the shore pebbles. And now Peter passes the door, which as you see lies continually open, and he has no light to guide him except one or two stars, that sent down but a cold, green, good-for-nothing twinkle—the walls and ivy darkening more and more all around. So he turns to the right, and down he goes on his hands and knees, and he makes to the very spot where you and I now stand, creeping on and on, for he knew right well that in that corner forenenst you, there was, as there is now, a heap of skulls. Yer honour, wasn't the mad fellow morthal brave? Well, he gropes and gropes for a skull, and he has just got a grip of one, and is fumbling in his pocket for the handkerchief to tie it up in, when he hears all at once a slow sickly voice, half groan, half growl, as a body may say,—just what you'd hear from a dying crathur that was saying

his last words, with the rattles in his throat; and this was what was said,—‘Och, Peter Cumming, you bad boy, what’s this you’re about? bad luck to ye! what are ye doing with my skull?’ With that, up rises Peter, his hands off the ground, but still standing on his two knees, and sure enough he was all of a trimble, and well he might; for, looking towards that very corner now before us, he saw what he had reason to remimber to his dying day; for there stood his own grandfather, Phaarig Cumming, surrounded by a light that came, of a blueish colour, from out of the earth, like what comes in September out of the reeds along the river; and there old Phaarig stood just as he was before his last sickness, in his frieze coteen and his sheepskin breeches, all smoth and greasy, and his bay-wig, and the very tobaccy running down from the two corners of his mouth, and staining all his rough chin. Heaven’s rest be with you, Phaarig! but there ye wor, the picthur of what ye looked the week before the death sickness came on ye. ‘Och then, Pethereen, (sez the ghost, for it was nothing else,) ye unlucky boy, what brings ye here, and what are you doing with my skull? What for would ye have your grandfather stand up at the day of judgment without a head, ye divil-may-care, drunken, irreligious black-guard?’ Now, all this while that the grandfather was scolding, Peter was a getting up off his knees, and, as the ould fellow kept on abusing without killing him, he takes courage, and he ups and says to the ghost, ‘Ah then, grand-daddy dear, is that yourself? and why are ye walking, and what makes ye unquiet? Maybe it’s masses ye want for yer poor sowl; and

sure I'm a good warrant to get them sed for ye ; for I'm the chapel-clerk, and it will go hard with me if I don't coax his riverance to say a dozen or two for ye, besides always keeping you in his intintions. And now, daddy dear, don't be angry,' says Peter, in a voice mighty sweet and coaxing ; ' don't, alanna, grudge me the use of yer skull just for one bit of an hour, while I make a guinea out of it ; sure it's not every night a poor fellow the likes of me can turn a penny this way. Stay, then, where you are till I come back ; I'll be here in no time, and I'll lave the skull, God bless it, just where I found it ; and, daddy dear, I'll tell ye what's more I'll do if it be plasing to you, now that I know for sartin it is part of your self, and that you can't do without it at the day of judgment, I'll come here to-morrow and put it under the clay, in the very spot where father and mother are buried, and where I myself will be put when I'm buried, glory be to God, and won't that plase you ? do, heaven's rest attend ye, and don't say against my having an hour's loan of your skull.' With that Pethereen cast a fond but fearful look towards his grandfather, but *now* he saw nothing, the light was gone, nothing was to be seen but darkness, no sound but the wind sighing through the ivy leaves. ' Silence gives consint,' says Peter ; so tying up with two good knots the skull in his handkerchief, home he comes by the way he went, finds his company still a drinking, lays down his skull before them, and gets his guinea ;—for I'd be glad to know who dare refuse or say he had not won his wager, seeing as how Peter proved his courage, and would stand up before any of



them, when he had just been after facing a ghost. It is said Peter was as good as his word, and kept his promise to his grandfather's ghost, for he *did* bring back the skull, and *did* put it dacently under the clay, where it's resting, for aught I know, to this very day. Some people, to be sure, were slow of believing that Peter saw his grandfather's ghost at all, and that it was only a drunkard's boast ; for it's but too thrue that Peter, though chapel-clerk, was a great drunkard and a great liar to his dying day. But this is sartain, that a man for a wager brought away by night a skull from this abbey, and brought it back again, which is what I would not do for all the guineas in Connaught."

On my return towards evening close to Killala, I had much conversation with my companion, whose understanding was naturally a good one, and whose mind was stored with a curious mixture of things credible and incredible. He certainly should not be judged by what I have just repeated of his conversation ; seeing me desirous to obtain legendary information, with the desire to please, which is the eminent characteristic of a poor Irishman, he poured forth all his store ; but when I spoke to him, as I did, upon other matters more allied to the common world, he showed he was a keen observer, and could form sound conclusions. I asked him how the people liked the removal of the Protestant bishop from the town ? He said, "no Killala man *could* approve of it, that it was the greatest mischief that ever the poor little town suffered ; that the Protestant bishops, as long as he could remember, and as far back as he ever could

hear the old people speak of, were good and kind men, that staid at home, spent their money amongst the people, set a good example, and did harm to no man; that the poor who lived on their bounty and the tradespeople who lived on their employment, were now suffering severely from their loss, and that the farming gentleman who lived in the big house was a poor substitute; and how could he help it? for why should it be expected of him to act the part of one who spent his thousands a-year, not in sporting or racing, or in wild and wicked ways, but like a Christian? God forgive them that took such good kind gentlemen away from our poor little out-of-the-way town." This led me to insinuate that the taking away of the Protestant bishop from Killala was, in a great measure, owing to the jealousy of the clergy of his own religion.

"Och, then, sir," says he, "maybe it would be better for them to mind their own affairs, and not be making or meddling with what don't consarn them; maybe it would be more becoming of them to settle their own disputes any way."

Here my friend entered somewhat at large into the differences and jealousies that existed between the followers of Bishops M'Hale and O'Finan; spoke of Dean —— and Father ——, and in a measure, hinted that the death of a priest near Crosmolina took place in consequence of these disputes. I shall not repeat what the man said further on this subject, and I only mention it in this cursory way to show that such disputes do exist; that the people are cognizant of them, discuss them among themselves;

and that it is very likely, that if the Established Church were put out of the way and removed from the land, this consummation so devoutly wished by the politicians of the Church of Rome, would only be followed by rancorous disputes that would then openly break out ;—disputes which are now smothering and kept from bursting forth by the common cause all are joined in against the Mordecai that sits at the king's gate.

When just nearing the town on our return, a red-haired, freckled-faced, heavy-shouldered girl, flauntingly dressed, but with her shoes and stockings in her hand, her big broad feet tramping the path, made haste to pass us, as if desirous not to be noticed.

"Ah, then, is that you, Nancy?" said my companion ; " and is it going to the fair ye are at this hour of the evening? It's not for good yer going there, and I desire ye to go home this instant moment. It's little ye thought ye'd meet *me* here ; to catch you disobeying my ordhers when I tould you by no manner of manes to go the fair."

"Why then, father, I'll *not* go home, not a foot of me ; what for? Why shouldn't I have my sport as well as others?" Saying this she kicked up her red heels and off she ran in the direction of the town.

"Well, sir, believe you me, I'll give that lassy as good a strapping as ever she got when she comes back."

"I presume," says I, "she is your daughter?"

"Yes, sir, she is ; and it's contrary to my bidding, and she knows for why, she's going to the fair for no good ; but no matther, I'll be even with her."

This is a specimen, and I just mention it however trivial it may appear, of the bad way in which parents of the lower orders manage their children; they are either too indulgent or too severe; they place no restraint on their own tempers in the presence of their families, nor do they endeavour to control passion when they see it rising in their children. This man threatened to beat a girl of seventeen or eighteen years of age, and I make no doubt if he caught her when she came home he performed his promise—but in all likelihood she took care to keep out of his way—if not, instead of arguing with her on her disobedience, he knocked her down.

On parting with my friend, he expressed a strong anxiety to know *who* I was.

“Why,” said I, “as to who I am, it would be no use to tell you; for, as you never heard my name before, in all likelihood you will never hear it again, and so what’s the use of repeating it?”

“Well, plase your honour, *what* are you?”

“Can’t you guess?”

“Why, then, your honour, I’m thinking yer one of the *clargy* people, but what soort I’m at a loss—yer not a priest, that I know.”

“Why?”

“Och, ye wouldn’t be asking me all the questions you did were ye a priest—and yer not a parson I suppose.”

“Why?”

“Troth, I’m thinking yer not so great a gintleman entirely.”

“What then?”

“Yer not a Methody preacher.”

“Why?”

“Och, there’s more laughter and fun about ye than with them sorry-looking crathurs.”

“Well, what then?”

“Troth, yer honour, ye put me out entirely; but still I’m thinking yer some of the clargy soort.”

“Well, Paddy, whatever I am here’s something for you, (putting some silver into his hand,) and now good-by to you, and give me your blessing.”

“Why then good luck may attend you night and day wherever ye go, and it’s I that would like to be afther meeting ye whenever ye come this way again, and that it may be soon—any how my blessing be with yer honour. Good night and safe home to you.”

The next morning I was up early, and not intending to set out for Ballycastle until after breakfast, I determined to employ two or three hours in examining the Round Tower and other things observable in the vicinity of this old place; and as I could not light upon my companion of the previous evening, and as I never, if I can help it, set out exploring without one, I took up with the man who was to drive the jaunting car that was to take me to Ballycastle, and I had no reason to repent of my companion. He was a *rare* gossiping communicative fellow, rather advanced in life, and appeared to know much of the country and people. So we first proceeded to the Round Tower—it stands apart from the street in a place surrounded by cabins and pig-styes, and has no old church or any ancient building near it. Like all others of its kind its door is many feet from the ground;



and being built of the most durable materials, time's common operations have had no influence on it. It has its conical cap, and there it stands in all unadorned simplicity.

"Ah, then, sir," says my guide, "it's well for this ancient castle that our good bishop was not taken away from us before he made it, as you see, all as one as new."

"Why, what did your bishop (I suppose you mean Dr. Verschoyle) do to it?"

"Why, didn't he fill up the great hole that the tunder and lightning made in it? Look up there, yer honour, on the south side, and half way or more up don't you see the least taste of a bulge. Well, some years ago, after a terrible tempest, the whole side above there was burst out, and after that we thought the whole would have come down, so terribly was it shaken, but the mason work was so good entirely, that there it stood for some years with the great gap in its side, until the bishop—and it was he that was the kind good old gentleman, and it's he that has the blessing of the poor—at his own expense repaired it, and it's now, as you see, as sound and safe as the day it was first built. I'm thinking if the lightning had not come until his lordship was taken away from us, we wouldn't be looking at this tower now. I remember well the time he put the finish on the repairing of it—it must have cost a sight of money the scaffolding; but, any how, there was a dispute about the way the finish should be put to the top—the Catholics wanted to have a cross fixed on it—the Protestants wanted a weathercock. I believe the sailors resorting to these

parts proposed to make it a lighthouse. 'No,' says the bishop, 'it shall be the way it was ever and always—the way St. Patrick left it I'll have it.' So there it is, and there I hope it will be as long as the world lasts."

We then walked westwards towards a rath that stood crowning with its lofty mound a considerable eminence. Having arrived at it, I was pleased to observe that it was dissimilar to most I have seen, for the circular mound was not, as is usual, entirely composed of earth, but was strengthened within by a stone wall. I have seen many raths entirely constructed of stones and multitudes composed of earth, but I don't recollect observing one before where a wall of stone is added to the defence of the earthen mound. From this rath there is an extensive view both seaward and inland, and is indeed a most interesting spot to look from.

"The Danes, plase yer honour," says my guide, "were mighty strong in Ireland when they put together this place."

"Why do you say the Danes? what right have you to suppose they threw up this rath?"

"Oh, sir, sure every one says that they were done by them. Who else *could* do them? but at any rate I myself know that the Danes had a hand in this here one, for I remimber when I was a boy a foreign timber ship brought a cargo here from Norway, and while in the port, there was a man aboard of her who seemed not as it were behoulding to the ship—they said he was a Danish gintleman. The Danes,—your honour, I'm sure, knows better nor I can tell ye,—they

live near Norway. Well, at any rate, every day he'd come up to this fort with an old parchment in his hand, and he'd look around and mark on a map that was painted on the parchment, different places in the country round about that he said belonged to his forefathers ; and he used to say that by right this was *his* fort. I'm thinking, yer honour, it wouldn't be asy for him to take possession."

From hence my companion brought me over some pretty green hills to see a holy well, which springs as most holy wells do, beautifully clear from the limestone rock ; and overhanging it is an old thorn on which sundry rags are hanging. This well, as I was informed, was not to be used for common purposes—nor should cattle be brought to drink out of it—they might to be sure come, if they chose, themselves to take a drink, and they would be more the better for it ; but to bring a horse to water would be unlucky ; or to bring any of the water to use for boiling potatoes, or any such purpose, would be a profanation. A horse, for instance, was brought here to drink, and he was choked. A woman brought a tubfull of it to boil her potatoes in, and while over the fire the potatoes all seemed swimming in blood—red and thick ; the whole boiling had to be cast on the dunghill. Near this sacred well runs the wall, a rather high one, of what once was the episcopal demesne. Within, the grounds, which are of considerable extent (I believe three hundred acres), were varied in their surface and apparently of great fertility. They seemed to be under the best possible cultivation, and to be stocked with cattle and sheep of the most improved breeds ; and I

don't think I ever saw a better crop of clover than was just being cut.

"The gentleman," says I to my companion, "who holds the land, seems to manage it well."

"Yes, sir, and it stands him upon, for he pays a murthering rint; and troth, sir, the times are changed—don't you see this big wall? nobody now is allowed to cross the land, or go in to gather a brustna; or slip in their pig or cow by night, as they used to do in the good old bishop's time; who, the Lord be good to him, as he had the place *asy* himself was asy with others. Many a poor crathur in the town used he allow to run their cow, or goat, or pig, as it were unknownst to himself on the land. Och, then, it was a bad day for the poor that he died and left none like him to come in his place."

"Well, I am glad," said I, "you speak well of the late bishop. I had the honour of his acquaintance, and I am sure you are right when you say, what I believe you feel, that he was a pious, gentle, and most beneficent man. You are old enough to remember the man he came after. Do you remember Bishop Stock?"

"Indeed, then, that I do, though I was but a gossoon when he went away; but I always hear the people say that he was a good man too, and that in the times of the great rebellion here, and after the French left the place, he did his best to keep the soldiers, and yeomen, and the bloody fencibles, from racking and ruining the people entirely."

"Well, you for one don't think it was a good thing to leave Killala without a Protestant bishop?"

"What for, yer honour, should I suppose such a thing? Why, may I never do a hand's turn, but I'd give the coat off my back, if it were the best I ever went to prayers in, to have the bishop back in the castle\* there below."

"Well, Pat, as we're speaking about bishops, did you ever hear any thing about the bishops that were here in old times, either Catholic or Protestant?"

"Why, then, yer honour, I heard talk of many of them, but I don't now remimber—any how, we don't know much of our own bishops here, for they live in Ballina, I believe, and seldom come to this town."

"But you must have heard of some of them who were remarkable men in their day. For instance, did you ever hear of a famous Bishop Lynch, a great scholar and a good man in every respect, that was over this See?"

"Indeed, sir, I can't rightly say; but now ye put me in mind of the name, I'll tell what I heard of one Lynch, but I don't think he was bishop; according to my story he was the head of the friars that were in Moyne Abbey, but he was a great man, and a saint, and maybe for all I know he was bishop too; but if yer honour will plase to listen to me I'll tell you all I heard about him. Yer honour knows, for I'm tould you were there last night along with Bill Barritt, that Moyne Abbey is a grand place entirely; and what must it have been before Luther and Calvin, or the curse of Cromwell fell on us. I could

\* "The Castle" is the name given to what was the Bishop's residence.



hear ould ancient people say it would be worth twenty miles' walking to hear mass then in the abbey, with the grand abbot in his vestments, and all the friars. Well, as you put me in remembrance of his name, there was one grate grate abbot, one Lynch or Laheen from Galway—he was full of larning—a grate scholar, as they say Bishop M'Hale himself now is, and like him he wrote many a book as I could hear about our religion, that's still in print; but myself doesn't know much about his life, barrin' the miraculous way in which he died, which I'm now goin' to be telling ye. Abbot Lynch, it's like, was full to the eyes of devotion, as he was of larning, and as he had the abbey of Kilroe that was built by the great St. Fiechin under his rule, he used latterly to walk there twice a week, and from that back to Moyne by way of pinance. So he was coming one Friday morning, of all days in the year, through Killala, and the Protestant bishop happened to be standing at the door of the castle; Bishop O'Tuohy I could hear was his name, and a good kind of man by all accounts he was, though O'Tuohy sounds well for an Irishman, it was never a loyal\* name in these parts. Any way the bishop bid him the time of day and axed him to taste something, for the Protestant clergy in them days were a deal betther and kinder to our own clargy than they are now, and so much the worse, I'm thinking, for both. 'No, thank ye,' ses the holy abbot; 'for,' ses he,

\* The term loyal has an import, in the dialect of our peasantry, different from its ordinary acceptation; with them it implies being faithful to each other, and sometimes to the oath administered at illegal meetings.

‘I’ve too much on my hands to make any delay, and I must be with my Maker before midnight.’ With that the bishop pressed him again, and axed him how he could be so sartin of his own death, and he having no sign of sickness at all upon him? ‘Oh,’ ses he, giving the bishop a touch, ‘we that come direct from St. Pether can see and know things that other clergy could not dhrame of,’ ses he. So on goes the holy abbot—an’ betune eleven and twelve o’clock that night, the bishop being greatly frikened, as was nathral you know, for sure I am the dacent gintleman did not desire to make game of his words; he called his sarvant, Bryan M’Loughlin was his name, a noticeable name it was too, as all the M’Loughlins come, yer honour knows, from the Danes, long, long ago. ‘Well, Bryan,’ ses the bishop; ‘Bryan,’ ses he, ‘take my best horse and ride for yer life, and bring me an account of what the clargy are a doing at Moyne Abbey.’ Well, my jewel, in less nor an hour afther, back comes M’Loughlin, with his baste in a lather all over, and his own hair sticking up on end, and his eyes rowling out of his head intirely. ‘Bryan,’ ses the bishop, ses he, ‘what frikened ye, man alive? ye look as if ye had seen a ghost.’ ‘Och, thin, it’s you that may say that, masther dear,’ says Bryan; ‘but if ye seen what I seen to-night. When I kem to the abbey I was goin’ to dismount, when what should I behould but four young clargy dhrawin’ an ould man with a leather belt tied about him, round the abbey. God protect us! An’ that ould man was the holy abbot that was with yer lordship to-day; and he ordhered

the friars to draw him that way to *complate* his pinance.' An' then he fell down dead, and that was the end of Abbot Lynch that's now a saint high up in heaven. Well and good, do you see, afther this thrue prophecy of the holy abbot, the Protestant bishop left the castle and was never heard of afther in them parts, only some say himself an' all his people became Catholics, and their childer are so to this very day."

I give the above statement of my guide, not only for the manner and oddity of it, but also to show how strongly tradition distorts facts and overlays truth. There was in this see, in the reign of Charles II. a Roman Catholic prelate of the name of Lynch, an eminent scholar, a loyal subject, and most pious man; and there was a Protestant Bishop of the name of Otoway—now spelt and pronounced Otway. Otoway would sound in an Irish mouth O'Touhy. Of some of the *realities* of those worthy men I may be allowed to say something. And first, concerning him who was my own namesake and of my family. Thomas Otway was an Englishman who took his degree in Cambridge, and was for his loyalty banished by Cromwell to the West Indies, and at the Restoration, as a reward for his piety, his learning, and his sufferings in the cause of the church, was consecrated Bishop of Killala and Achonry in the year 1670. Sir James Ware, in his brief annals, only reports concerning his doings, while for nine years he was in Killala, that "he killed three notorious rebels." I presume the annalist means to infer that the bishop was instrumental in bringing to justice these malefactors.

Harris, in his enlarged edition of Ware, states that he was exceedingly beloved by all ranks of people, which I think, is in a measure supported by what my *friend* has stated in his legend ; and that having rebuilt the cathedral church of Killala from the foundation, at his own expense, and erected and repaired other churches in the diocese, he was translated in the year 1679 to Ossory, bearing with him the good opinion of all, as an hospitable, charitable, and good prelate. In Ossory he lived twelve years, in the universal esteem of every rank and degree ; he devoted his whole income to pious and patriotic uses. He built, endowed, and furnished with appropriate books, a library in the church of St. Canice, for the use of the clergy of his diocese ; he gave a considerable sum for the augmentation of Trinity College Library ; he defended the privilege of his see against the usurpation of the citizens of Kilkenny ; he recovered many of the augmentation lands given to the see by the act of settlement ; he beautified his cathedral and presented it with three hundred and sixty-three ounces of communion plate ; he was constant and discriminate in his private charities. Having lived a bachelor he left to his own family but 206*l.*, and he is (as Harris says,) mentioned with honour to this day. I may be excused for thus making mention of a man of the same name and stock as myself. I believe that if the bishops of the succeeding century had been like him, the Established Church would be in a different position than what it now is, and while, looking back for one hundred and fifty years and inquiring how much church property is appropriated

in the families of bishops, the conclusion might be come to that if certain Hanoverian prelates,\* who have been the founders of aristocratical houses in Ireland, and the means of making their descendants lords, baronets, and squires of high degree, had left but 206*l.* to their families and no see lands, the borders of the church might have been enlarged, while the grandeur of their descendants might not be so dazzling. This supposition, to be sure, is but idle and so, no doubt, is the following: namely, that if my namesake and blood relation were now alive—in the exercise of his patronage he would do for me what has never yet been attempted, that is, offer me a benefice. I rather think he *might* do this for one of *his own* who has been in the ministry for thirty-eight years, inasmuch as, when he purchased for a considerable sum of money three exhibitions in Cambridge for scholars entering from the school of Kirby Lonsdale, he ordered that persons of his own name should have the preference.

Of Bishop John Lynch I must say something. As

\* I say Hanoverian here, because the sovereigns of the Stuart line, with all their faults, took care to promote to the Episcopate men of known piety and learning, and did not make church patronage subservient to ministerial policy. On the contrary, the house of Hanover, under the direction of Sir Robert Walpole, and other politicians of his school, consigned to the prime minister of the day the appointments to the prelacy as a means of winning over the aristocracy. Let any one who knows church history compare the Irish Bishops of the seventeenth with those of the eighteenth century, and he must observe the contrast. Alas, for the church of Ireland when such corruptors as Lord Townsend had the filling of the episcopal bench.



an eminent scholar and the best of all Irish historians—as a truly loyal priest, when allegiance to the king was forgotten by so many in subserviency to foreign influence and papal usurpation—as being moreover in my estimation an humble and devoted Christian while a Roman Catholic prelate, I honour the man, and regret much that no one has done justice to his memory by writing his life. John Lynch was born in Galway—his family was one of the most eminent amongst its ancient tribes. In early life he kept a school there, and the seminary was remarkable for the excellent scholars it sent forth. There is a story which I do not believe, of Primate Ussher persecuting this man and closing his school in Galway. I should think it was before the commencement of the great rebellion he wrote his “*CAMBRENSIS EVERSUM*,” which purports to be a refutation of the falsehoods and misrepresentations of Gerald Barry, who accompanied the Anglo-Normans in the invasion of Ireland in the twelfth century, and wrote an account of Ireland which is remarkable for its pert and superficial observations on the country and people. This work of Lynch’s is in my estimation the best history that has been written by an Irishman of his own country, and it is a pity that it is so scarce, and that it is locked up, as I may say, from the general reader, in the Latin language. Lynch, during the great rebellion, took the part of the moderate Roman Catholic clergy against the mischievous machinations of the Papal nuncio; and seeing that the interference of this dangerous Italian had raised up a foreign influenced party that was promoting the utter ruin of his country, by dividing the

people from the gentry and nobility, and urging them under the leading of priests to do whatever the *Court* of Rome directed, he took the opposite side, joined such sensible Roman Catholic bishops as Rooth, Dease, and De Burgho, who would have made peace with the Lord Lieutenant, and would have averted those violent and usurping prelatical proceedings that drove the Marquis of Ormond out of the country and brought in Cromwell and what is called his curse. When, in consequence of the schemes of the foreign influenced party he was opposed to, the Roman Catholic cause was lost, and the Republican and Puritan party in full possession of the property and dominion of the island, Lynch retired to France; there he composed a work entitled *Alithinologia*, in which he defended the moderate and loyal part of the Roman Catholic clergy against the misrepresentations of the nuncio's writers—such as O'Farrell, Enos, Bruodin, and Con O'Mahony, and exposed the designs of those who would have, under Papal influence, conferred the crown of Ireland on a foreign Romish prince, and would have established an Episcopal tribunal of inquisitorial, uncontrolled, and excommunicating power, on the necks of poor priest-ridden Irishmen. This book of Lynch's is very scarce; I never saw but one copy of it, and I assume that he who would translate it and give his work to the public, would serve the cause of historical literature and of his country. Lynch wrote the life and death of a predecessor of his in the see of Killala, the Right Rev. Francis Kirwan. His biographer wished to exhibit in the gentle yet high-minded—in the pious, unpolitical, non-agitating

character of this good man, what an Irish prelate ought to be. This work, equally scarce, should be in the hands of the Roman Catholic clergy, and might satisfy *some* of them that the way to go to heaven, or to show that EXCELLENT WAY to others, is not the way or the walk of clerical politicians. Kirwan was excommunicated by the nuncio. Lynch did not love him the less for that. It was but a little before his death that Lynch was consecrated Bishop of Killala. I believe before that he was Archdeacon of Tuam; at all events he was a shining light in his church, and will be always held in honour in Ireland, as the defender of its ancient civilization, and as showing how well a Roman Catholic churchman can be loyal to his sovereign, and a promoter of peace and good will amongst his countrymen.

I offer no excuse whatever for these slight sketches of two worthy prelates, that adorned the see of Killala. I might mention others, and would, had I space, and were this trivial work a fitter place, speak somewhat at large concerning Bishop Stock, whose peculiar position as a prisoner in his own palace during the French invasion, entitles him to notice, and whose temperate, clear, and well-written account of that invasion, is calculated to please and inform every one who reads it. This narrative plainly shows that the French were wonderfully mistaken in the character of the people they came to fraternise with—they expected to find republicans, and only met with bigoted creatures who cared not a fig for the Republic, one and indivisible; but very much indeed for the overthrow of the Protestant religion and Protestant

property. The reader also would perceive that, even though it was well he had, while in captivity, the French to protect himself and his family from insult, and what might be worse, yet certainly the Mayo insurgents did not evince that blood-thirstiness which was so abhorrent in the Leinster rebels ; neither were they guilty of such revolting deeds as were perpetrated at Wexford bridge and Scullabogue.

Returning to Killala to breakfast, in order afterwards to proceed to Ballycastle, I asked my companion was there any thing else worth seeing in or about the town ; and he telling me that there was a curious ancient cave in the churchyard, I went to examine it, being assured that it was not what I suspected, a common vault. Through dank weeds I made my approach to it, and ventured with some difficulty to creep down and on through a narrow passage, and found it to be one of those ancient hiding-places which are to be seen all over the island, and more especially in its maritime districts, and are very generally excavated in our larger raths. In my former volume I make mention of one that is in the great rath at Lucan near Dublin ; they are constructed like inverted cones, of which there are sometimes two or three ; the circular apartments are connected by low and narrow passages. This one in Killala churchyard must have been there long before the ground was appropriated as a cemetery, and has many passages which I had not time to explore. It is not far from the sea shore, and was evidently constructed, not as a sepulchre, but as a place of concealment for persons and property. I know no part of Ireland

where these crypts are so abundant as in the county of Antrim, where they are called Picts' houses. I was some time ago shown one in the churchyard of Connor; it was found, as that has been at Killala, by a person making a grave having his spade go down into the cave below. In the island of Islay, opposite the coast of Antrim, they are very abundant, and called hiding holes; indeed they are to be found all through the Hebrides, and in the remote St. Kilda. Olaus Wormius states that they are frequent in Norway.\* Tacitus speaks of such subterranean artificial caves where the Germans hid their food and often their families. Hortius speaks of them in Barbary; Russel, in Syria; and Harmer cites a passage from the history of the Crusades, where Baldwin I., when he invaded Palestine, finding that the villagers near Askalon had retired to subterranean caves, ordered fires to be lit at their mouths to force them to surrender. Stukely, speaking of these crypts as found in Britain, calls them inverted barrows. The universality of these secret places all over the world similarly constructed and applied to the same purpose, induces me to infer that there must have been one ancient race that ranged the world, leaving their circles, cromleachs, pillar stones, crypts, and barrows, as monuments of a people the same in arts, habits, and religion, wherever they went.†

\* In quibusdam Norvigie locis etiamnum Cryptæ conspiciuntur subterraneæ, partim durissimis petris incisæ, partim ingentium saxorum accumulatis congestæ.

† I am supported in my view of the antiquity and oneness



Proceeding from Killala towards Ballycastle, there was nothing that caught my attention worth noticing.

of the people who constructed these monuments by Mr. Kitto, the author of the *Pictorial History of Palestine*, a work full of instruction, and which shows the writer to be a man of great industry and learning, and as far as I have read the book, satisfying me as to the soundness of his religious views. "Monuments of large and rude stones, disposed in the various forms of which examples are given in the cuts at pages 341, 342, and whose date ascends, for the most part, beyond all history and tradition, are found dispersed all over the world, in countries the most remote from each other.

"A friend who has given great attention to the subject, has favoured us with a list of such monuments in different countries, from which it appears that not only are they numerous in Great Britain, Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey, Denmark, Sweden, France, and Germany, but that they have also been found in the Netherlands, Portugal, Malta and Gozo, in Phœnicia, and in India.\* To which we may also add, that such have also been discovered in Palestine, Persia, Northern Africa, North America, and the Islands of the Indian Archipelago, and of the South Sea.

"Now seeing that such monuments are found in countries so far asunder, between which it is impossible to trace, after that dispersion of which the Scriptures speak, any such ancient communications as might have led to their production; and seeing, moreover, that the same Scriptures, as soon as they enter into detailed history—about 1000 years after the Deluge, begin to notice such monuments, not as new things, but as being in well-known and established use, it is morally impossible to account for their origin and wide dispersion but by supposing that the ideas connected with them existed before the confusion of tongues divided the family of man into nations, and, together with the pressure of the wants arising from an increased population, drove them far asunder, bearing with them the notions and practices which had been common to them all.

"In this explanation two lines of argument, from facts, terminate; for while, on the one hand, the remarkable agree-

\* Chiefly in Malabar, also near Bombay, where cromleachs are called umbrella stones.

After leaving the village of Palmerston the road to Ballycastle is very ugly ; but, as I may here gather up all I have to say on what I saw in Tyrawly, I may as well now note down what I observed on a subsequent occasion when returning from Ballycastle. My object was, to visit the ruins of the monastery of Rathfran, which lies about two miles to the east of the village of Palmerston, and adjoins the well-sheltered and comfortable residence of Mr. Palmer of Summerhill. In approaching this and going over the hill of Mulla-

ment, concerning the use of these monuments, in the most ancient times, and among nations the most remote, is best explained by referring their origin to some time when men dwelt together, and had not yet spread themselves abroad in the world ; on the other, we learn from Scripture that there was such a time, as well as its date and duration : and, what is more, as the same high authority takes occasion to notice, the existence of such monuments about 500 years after the Deluge, in a family fresh from the original seat of the post-diluvian race, and in such a manner as to demonstrate that they were not then new, the historical proof ascends much nearer than could well be expected, to the very period to which, on other grounds, we should be inclined to refer the origin of these remarkable monuments, and of the notions connected with them. Thus we think the lines of argument concur in bringing us to the same result,—that the monuments called Druidical existed before the dispersion of mankind ; and that their existence in all the countries of the world is to be accounted for by the fact, that men carried with them, in their migrations from the parent seat, the more prominent usages of their primitive condition.

“All this seems so clear, that we should hardly have thought this expression of the view we entertain, worth the space it has occupied, were it not that a large class of antiquarians have been disposed to refer them to some later source, such as the maritime traffic of the Phœnicians. But all causes less than that which has now been stated, seem inadequate to account for the now ascertained extent to which such monuments have been diffused.”—Book iii. chap. i. p. 337.

cross, I was surprised to see on every side of me a number of Druidical monuments of different sizes and forms. I have never seen so many clustered, as I may say, within a circuit of half a mile as here, except at Carrowmore, near the town of Sligo. At the four roads of Mullacross there is what is called a giant's grave. In the fine fertile pasture field to the left of the road, as you descend the hill towards Killala, there are two or three circles; on the right hand side of the road there are still more; on the hill beyond Mr. Palmer's house there are two, one large and the other small—altogether I reckoned ten, on an area of ground of not more than one hundred acres. One of them, as you proceed southwards from the cross-road and to the left of the road, is remarkable not only for the great size of the stones, but for its oval form and the interior cromleach, the upper stone of which has been cast down, and is lying in the area of the circle or rather oval; there is another circumstance remarkable in this monument, that the stones comprising it are larger in the western end of the oval nearest the cromleach, and gradually diminish in size until at the eastern end they are so small as to be almost buried in the soil. To the southwest there are two circles adjoining each other, and connected by a straight avenue of stones. Altogether this is a very interesting vicinity, and worthy of the more accurate examination of the antiquarian, as indeed is the whole north western district from Sligo to the point of Erris. I received all possible hospitable attention from the family of Summerhill, and it was not Mr. Palmer's fault that I did not take more time to

examine the antiquities of his very interesting neighbourhood. I visited, in company with his son, the ruins of Rathfran: it was founded here in the thirteenth century by the D'Exeter (vulgo Dexter) family for Dominican friars. Burke, in his *Hibernia Dominicana* mentions it as having produced many eminent men of that preaching and inquisitorial order; and he notices some as once dwelling here, who afterwards suffered martyrdom for "THE FAITH," on the suppression of religious houses. It is also memorable for being the scene of a cruel murder, even in the sanctuary, of Thomas Bourke, of Castlebar, by his own nephews. Except one tomb, there is nothing worth seeing in this ruin; its cloisters no longer remain, and there are no architectural decorations whatsoever. I have seldom seen in any part of the island so rich a piece of ground as surrounds this building. With Dr. Nelson, who accompanied me in this visit to Rathfran, and procured me an introduction to the house of Summerhill, I had some very interesting conversation about this country. He called my attention to the trachyte formation of the rocks here, which, according to Archdeacon Verschoyle, is, as far as respects the British isles, unique. The igneous character of this formation accounts, in a great measure, for the fertility of the soil. I believe, as is always the case, that (for instance in the county of Limerick, the hill of Croghan in the King's County, and other localities) when the igneous rock underlies, the soil is of superior fertility. The huge grey stones composing the Druidical monuments all around, were, as far as I could see, composed of this beautiful

trachyte, which, when broken, exhibited in its fresh fracture glassy plates of felspar in shining laminæ closely compacted together, and as hard as porphyry; indeed, if not too hard, it might be used with great effect for ornamental purposes. According to Archdeacon Verschoyle, a trap dyke crosses this rare formation, where it assumes the appearance of basalt, fine grained, and prismatic, and in one place regularly columned, and the pillars as neatly defined as those at the Giant's Causeway.



## CHAPTER VIII.

Ballycastle—The Laggan—Downpatrick Head—A dreary shore—Want of improvement—Want of *desire* for improvement—Landlords, Agents Under Agents—An old castle and old road—The sacred promontory—A Poolnashanthana—A sad story and one still sadder—An anecdote of 1798—Another of a man making a bull on himself—Another concerning a Captain Bold—A digression, being C. O.'s confession of a disposition to shiver in very shaking times—How to prime and load—A dead man's letter—Thought better of it—A colic a security against cold iron—An old squire's good nature and wrath.

DETERMINING to spend a whole day in visiting what I understood was worthy of observation in the vicinity of Ballycastle,\* I drove up to the house of a Mr. M——, who keeps a shop, but does not affect to entertain travellers, and that for the best reason—that there are few, if any, travellers to entertain. I got better accommodation than I had reason to expect, and great civility, which with me at all times compensates for what, thank goodness, I can do without—the comfort that to a fastidious tourist is so indispensable.

My very civil host prepared to accompany me the next day to Downpatrick Head, to see which was my object in stopping at Ballycastle. Of this village I

\* In order to keep up something like a unity of narration, I have fused together in this chapter the result of two visits I made to Ballycastle, in two successive seasons. My last sojourn was at the hospitable house of Mr. Sterne, commander of the coast-guard.

need not say much ; a single street forms it ; like most Irish towns near the sea it has improved and is improving. Small slated houses year after year have been added to it. It lies in the centre of a fertile district, called the Laggan, and the vicinity supplies a larger produce of corn than might have been expected ; but why this village should have been located as it is on the side of a hill, two miles from the sea shore, away from the river that flows half a mile to the west, is to me unimaginable. I suppose that when the first houses, the chapel, and the church were erected, there was no notion that Glasgow and Liverpool would want the corn growing in the Laggan.

I walked to Downpatrick Head, and taking my direction towards the sea shore, the way was principally over a tract of land that has been covered with the blowing sand, and which has overwhelmed green land and bog, and left all ugly and desolate. Nothing, indeed, can be more disagreeable to look at than a scene like this ; it shows that man is on the retreat before the elements, and that his ignorance or indolence makes him give up the contest. On arriving at the shore the sight was grand and yet dreary : the tide was out, and the interval between high and low water mark presented a series of planes of the stratified rock—descending like great steps of stairs, over which in times of storm it may be supposed how the billows burst, and boiled, and heaved the enormous rampart of rolled stones that crested the verge of the boundary over which the ocean had not yet passed.

On my remarking what a terrible lee shore this must be when the wind blew from the north-west, my companion said, "Yes, sir, and many a vessel has gone to pieces, and many a life been lost here; and look what nature has done there to aid man in his exertions to make a place of shelter on this coast. Observe, sir, yonder promontory westward—not a finer place or more to be desired for a pier in all Ireland, and yet nothing has been done. Some years ago, as I understand, before I came to live in this place, when the government was making piers all along the west coast, yonder headland was fixed on, and a ship actually came loaded with cut stones to deposit them and commence the work; but when her skipper sent ashore to know whether the country people would come and help to unlade her, there was no one to be got to put a hand to the work; so, after a few days, the ship sailed away and deposited her cargo where the people were willing to receive it."

"I should think," said I, "that such a neglect of a good offer should be more fitly laid to the charge of the landed proprietor or his agent, than to the people."

"It is true for you, sir. Surely to have a good pier for the export of the corn grown on his property was *his* look-out; but where there is neither a resident landlord, nor, perhaps, a resident agent; when the looking after a property devolves on an ignorant under-fellow, who is, as I may say, a beggar on horseback; who thinks of nothing but making a little great man of himself, at the expense both of

landlord and tenant—how can any thing better be expected? But mark me, sir,” continued my companion, “I do not desire you to consider what I say as applicable to the property we are now looking over. I am too short a time settled in this neighbourhood to give an opinion as to *its* management, and I beg of you to consider that I am not alluding at all to it; but I must say that a great deal of the poverty, the absence of improvement, and the incapacity of the holders of land to rise out of the low state in which they are—getting worse instead of better—arises from the petty tyranny of the understrapping fellows that wear boots and ride horses, on the *presents* they extort from the poor farmer; whose yarn, ducks, geese, fowl, and eggs, all go to propitiate these greedy cormorants. Don’t you think, sir, that if a landlord cannot, or will not, reside on his property, he should at least have a resident agent; some one who has the heart to raise the people, as well as the head to raise the rents? I wonder much that the great landlords don’t see how bad it is for themselves and their tenantry to have a LITTLE GREAT MAN coming down from Dublin, or some distant place, every gale day, to lift the rents, and then passing away in his gig or coach, leaving his business for the rest of the year to the management of a *driver*. Isn’t there some old saying that goes to show this—that there must be great need where the devil drives?”

“Why, Mr. M——,” said I, “you seem to have thought somewhat of these matters, and I think

you have said you have not been long in the country."

"Yes, sir, you are are right ; I have seen much of the effects of good and bad agency on the prosperity of landed proprietors, and I'm *not* of this country. I came from the county of Sligo, where there are some right well managed properties, where some agents really, by their care and intelligence, compensate for the unavoidable absence of the proprietor, and where the tenants are led, but not driven."

Proceeding along towards Downpatrick Head, we passed an old castle on the verge of the tidewater-mark ; its walls tottering under the assaults of the spring tides, evinced how much the sea is encroaching on the land. This also is shown by the remains of a once well laid and compactly formed causeway, which led along the shore in the direction of the sacred promontory. This is now in most places broken up and obliterated by the sea ; and, though at the time we passed it, the ocean was growling away a quarter of a mile off, and full forty feet below the level of that old pilgrim's path, yet, when rising in its wintry might, it had succeeded in breaking it up, and it was only here and there it could be traced. This is a fine shore for the collection of sea-weed, and I suppose the productiveness of the Laggan is in a measure to be attributed to it.

We now had got to the rising ground that ascends gradually until it forms the Head of Downpatrick, and terminates in a perpendicular and noble cliff. The district of the Laggan slopes gradually from a



line of secondary mountains, until it touches the sea at Ballycastle and Lacken bays. Between these two a canal might be cut without much sinking or much intervening lockage; but northward the land rises again gradually to the eminence comprising Downpatrick, and forming, as it were, another range of high lands which, by the convulsion I have heretofore mentioned, and shall again allude to, is now in a great measure swallowed up by the Atlantic. It is on this green inclined plane that the patron held here at stated times in honour of Ireland's saint is kept: it is a fine place in fine weather for such an assemblage; and when the multitudes are seen thereon in their holiday clothing, and decked out in the yellow and scarlet colours with which the Mayo women adorn themselves, it must be a lively sight. My companion assured me that such was the crowd of people he saw here one day, that a hare being started from her form, the young men surrounded and ran her down.

There is a holy well, of course, here: no religious place could in Ireland be without one: it is supposed to be a proof that the Irish faith was drawn from a hotter and drier climate, when wells are so much valued. This island must have been always sufficiently supplied with water to have made wells neither much wanted nor valued. At all events, at this holy well begin the numerous and toilsome stations round which pilgrims perform penance, going round and round a stated number of times on their bare knees, and telling their beads. We now ascended the hill a little higher, and came to a chasm that yawned unexpectedly at our feet. It was about fifty yards long and about ten wide, and

down about eighty feet below, you saw the sea as green and clear as an emerald, rising and heaving softly and harmoniously, and disclosing many fathoms deep all the magnificent and beautifully tinted vegetations that adorn the caverns of the ocean. Sunk in the middle of the fair plain, you cannot at first imagine how came the sea here, but, by-and-by you see that it is open at both ends, that, in fact, the roof of a great sea cave, that has penetrated through this promontory, has fallen in, and you learn that you can enter at the north-east of the promontory, and, passing along in a boat for nearly half a mile, can come out at its south-western side, and that this is a great skylight by which the sun and air are admitted into the recesses and sonorous labyrinths of this great excavation. It is called Poolnashanthana; there are many of the kind on this coast, and I had already observed a fine one in the Mullet of Erris, but this one at Downpatrick is far and away the deepest, the largest, the grandest I have seen, and is certainly a great natural curiosity. At the bottom of this chasm, there is a ledge of rock, perhaps the remains of the fallen-in roof, which is bare when the tide is out, and which, covered as it is with sea vegetations, that never have been disturbed, presents a perch for the cormorant, and a bed for the seal, and around which the lobster crawls and hunts its prey amidst its translucent recesses.

On a soft sunny day, when all above and below is still, it is pleasant to wear away the lazy hour in looking down from above, and ponder on the beautiful contrasts of light and shade that this cavern presents,

to see the riven rock painted by nature's own hand with ochres, red, brown, and yellow ; lichens scarlet, white, orange,—crystallizations of lime, iron, or silice, sparkling where a sunbeam brightened them. Down below, the starfish and medusa floating in purple beauty, and spreading out their efflorescent rays,—while every now and then the quiet modulations of the incoming tide, as they sigh below, are broken in upon by the cooing of the sea pigeon in its safe fastness, or the hoarse shriek of the caitiff cormorant as it reposes after the success of its fishing in the calm deep. I would like to spend some of the few idle days my lot allows me in this busy world, hanging over this Poolnashanthana, and in quiet loneliness admiring how beautiful, and grand, and good, God is in his multitudinous creations.

And yet, this sea cave has exhibited not only what is beautiful under serene skies, and grand and fearful under stormy ones, but it has been the scene of great human calamity and intense suffering. I was told of a poor fellow passing along, with his horse laden with the sea-weed he had gathered on the rocks, and the mist had risen from the ocean and settled on all the promontory, and poor Pat had gone the way so often, that, in spite of the fog, which could be almost cut, it was so thick, yet he felt sure of his direction ; but it was not so ; down he and his horse went. It was a pitiable sight (says my informant,) to behold the wife and the little ones next morning, tossing their arms in grief over the chasm. The wind and sea had risen in the night, and burst from the north-east into the cavern, and the rending raging billows,

and the crashing roll of the stones below had ground both man and horse to atoms! Nothing was to be seen of the remains of the lost ones but some shreds of the panniers that were thrown up high and dry on a rock ledge to assure the disconsolate that here it was that the husband and father had perished.

But this is nothing to what occurred some forty years ago, when the French, by landing at Killala, had induced the population of Mayo to rise in rebellion, and when, after early success, and subsequent defeat, the hopes of the insurgents were altogether extinguished by the defeat and surrender of the French at Ballinamuck,—and, after the surrender of Killala to the king's forces, the hour of retribution came down on the poor misguided people and the curse of martial law, domiciliary visits and free quarters wasted all around. There is a village in the Laggan not far from Downpatrick, and the young and able of that community had, in the general rising, gone out,—and why should not they, when told by their betters, in whom they entirely trusted, that their country and their religion called them to the field; they had been at the taking of Killala and Ballina, and were active—as all Roman Catholic Mayo was—in defeating General Lake at Castlebar; and now they had come home to reap their corn, and their wives and families had given God thanks that, with but one or two exceptions, all had returned safe, and the wise and prudent had asked what good had been gained by all this *ruxtion*, and the answer still was, “It's well it's no worse” when the hard word came one day, as the whole village population was busy stooking

the oats, that the army from Killala was coming, that the terrible Frazer fencibles were at hand,—hard, stern, plundering men who gave no quarter. Of course, the men's consciences told them that, as insurgents they were amenable to the law, and their fears urged their flight—but where? The red coats were too near to give them time to flee to the mountains, and so they made to the cliffs.

Here, often these young and active men were accustomed to go a fowling, and along the great precipice of Downpatrick, pluck the young sea bird from the ledges of the rock, rob the sea pigeon's nest, or surprise the young seal in the recesses of Poolnashanthana. In pursuit of these wild sports, their practice was, to let themselves down by ropes, and, trusting to the steadiness and vigour of their companion above, to hang along the face of the cliff or descend to holes and caves otherwise inaccessible. On this occasion, they recollected the Poolnashanthana, and aware that the tide was out, considered that they might safely resort to the ledge of rock that remained for some hours uncovered below, and there stay concealed until the soldiers had scoured their village and retired, under the conviction that their victims had escaped. Accordingly, they, to the number of twenty-five, took an active and able-bodied woman with them; and, by means of her holding a rope from above, all successively descended the chasm, and seated themselves on the rock, while the woman went back to the village, having received strong injunctions to return and draw them up again when the army had gone away, or,



at any rate, before the tide should rise and cover their resting place.

It may be imagined the suspense of those poor men: they were near enough to hear in the still autumn day, the musket shots; they thought of their houses fired, their corn in flames, their cattle driven off, and, what was worse than all, their defenceless women abused. The day wore away, and the westering sun sent its slanting beams more and more faintly down the chasm; the tide was coming in fast, the ripple became a wave as it boomed in, and rose gradually so as to touch and cover their feet. But why go on? The woman went, but returned not; frightened out of her wits by the fury and licence of the soldiery, she forgot her trust, and fled away towards the inland hills; the army had retired, night came on, and the tide rose to its accustomed limits, and it covered higher than any human head that populous rock; and when another sun arose, and the women and greybeards of the doomed village came to Pool-nashanthana, they could see some corpses lying dry and bloated here and there in the caves and chasms; others had floated out to sea. The sun has seldom shone on a more melancholy sight! But it avails not to continue the subject,—a generation of the males of that poor hamlet was swept away, and at this day not an old man is to be found there.

While I am on the subject of the Connaught rebellion of 1798—an insurrection begun when all other risings throughout the island had been put down, and which, called into operation by a handful of fo-

reigners, was a hopeless and bootless enterprise from its very beginning—I may relate some interesting circumstances, told me by a dear friend who happened to be a Protestant curate of the parish of Ballycastle during that period. Then a very young man, active, able, and devoted, he though a minister had become a yeoman, and as such he witnessed many revolting, many melancholy, and many ludicrous scenes.

Of course the troops composing the king's army at that period, consisting as they did of fencibles, militia, and yeomanry, were very difficult to keep in order, and under a very lax discipline; and the men who with such activity ran away at Castlebar from a handful of Frenchmen, were, when their cause was uppermost, when military licence had its swing, very cruel, and very grasping, and very licentious. When I get to Ballina I may report some anecdotes, illustrating the state of things at that period. I shall now only mention one or two circumstances, which have a ludicrous rather than a melancholy character.

Following the army, and often times forming part of its strength, there were many who lived by plunder, and horse-stealing and jockeying were quite common. Rebels' horses were of course appropriated whenever they were taken, and often men, who never had been rebels, had their horses pressed, as for the king's service, with the promise, which seldom was fulfilled, of having the cattle returned when his majesty ceased to want them. When, however, matters were subsiding into peace, many who had lost their horses and had information of where they were to be had, took short and not very legal ways to get back what they con-

sidered their own, and to this effect, 'cute and daring fellows, accustomed to such pranks, were prowling about and making free with horses whenever an opportunity presented itself. Now, my friend, as good a yeoman trooper, as he was a parson, and perhaps better, had obtained a capital horse ; for a pound or two he had bought as fine a cut of a weight-carrying old Irish hunter as the plains of Mayo ever boasted. Where the horse originally came from it was not needful to inquire ; it had carried a rebel from Castlebar to Ballinamuck, and that was enough to make a title to him, and now he was the pride and solace of the military minister. But lo ! as he was one fine Sunday holding forth to a congregation, principally military, in the church of Ballycastle, just as he had come to the second division of his text, happening in the pause of his discourse to look out of the window near the pulpit, which commanded a view of the adjoining street, he saw a man he knew well to be a notorious thief, taking his horse out of the stable, and in the act of girthing a saddle on his back. Here was a trial between the proprieties of the pulpit and the fear of losing a capital horse ; so, as was natural, propriety gave way, and the young parson cried out to the churchwarden, who occupied a pew near the door, in a loud and quick and altered voice from that in which he was previously addressing his " dear brethren," " Run, Jack Black, run out for the life of you ; there's a rascal just going to steal my horse." It was satisfactory to me, at any rate, who loved that man who in future quiet times turned out a good and faithful minister, to know that Jack Black the church-

warden was time enough to rescue the horse, but not to nab the thief.

As I am fallen back on these times, I may as well summon up a few other recollections connected with them. Ballycastle, small as it still is, and much smaller and more wretched as it was then, formed the quarters of a troop of horse that drew its supplies from the Laggan, and for the time there was rather a better sort of public-house, generally well filled with troopers and strangers, that came as connected with the army; it also was frequented by stragglers from Killala, and amongst the rest some sailors, and one of them a negro, had come over from that port to shoot birds and enjoy an idle day of fun at Downpatrick Head. Moreover, there was a fair to be held next day at Killala, and a young lusty fellow, a thriving farmer from the farthest recesses of Ballyglen, had come in; and as the times were wild, he determined to stop for the night at Ballycastle, and proceed to the fair, eight miles off, in the morning. So, we may suppose, the troopers and the sailors, the young farmer and sundry others, assembled in the kitchen of the inn,—many of them had never seen a negro before, and amongst the rest, the Tyrawly farmer was in great wonder, and rather in dread of the black-a-moor; and after a while, great was his disgust when told by mine hostess that he could not get any bed unless he slept with blacky.

For a while he proposed to himself to go on his way; but he had money in his pocket, and the times were bad. So he determined to stay at any rate, but to sit up all night rather than go alongside of the moor.

So he sat on, and to drown care and timidity, he drank until he became stupidly intoxicated, and fell asleep, and in this state, as the sailors are great practical jokers, they got a burnt cork and blackened the farmer's face, and as the negro had gone early to his nest, they put the farmer beside him, and it was thought a merry sight to see the two black ones snoring together on the same bolster.

Now it so happened that the farmer in his anxiety to be off betimes to the fair, had given the hostler directions to call him before dawn of day. So having slept such an uneasy sleep, as those do who throw themselves into a whiskey fever by over-night potations, and dreaming consequently of the negro, and his money, and rebels, and robbers, when aroused by the hostler, and told his time was come to get up, his head was full of confusion, and his temples beating with the effects of his night's intemperance. So rising most unwillingly, and hastily putting on his clothes, in the dusky room, and proceeding to a little looking glass, the only one in the apartment, that hung over the chimney piece, he saw his face all black as any African; and no man could be more rejoiced, none happier, in the confusion of his ideas, when he called out to Paddy the hostler, "Come here, you spalpeen of a blackguard; see what you've done, you've awoke the wrong man! Don't you see it's the black-a-moor that you've called up instead of me; so, that being the case, I'll just go lie down and take a sleep until the proper time comes for *myself* to get up."

There is a concatenation in story telling, and allow-



ing myself to be an old gossip, I proceed to narrate another anecdote, derived from the same source, bearing on personal ideality, and exhibiting a happy Hibernian confusion of ideas in a person a native of this country, and living in the stirring times of the rebellion of 1798.

A. B. (we choose the first letters of the alphabet to signify one we are not anxious to name) whose family flourished in Tyrawly, had county interest enough to obtain a company for the hope of the race, in one of the Mayo regiments of militia; and not long after he found himself with his corps, as part of the combined army that was to be drawn together to force the rebels' strong position on Vinegar Hill, near Enniscorthy. Our Connaught captain, though he had been engaged in affairs of honour, and had stood on the sod before a pistol, had never yet been in a battle; and the night before the expected conflict, as he sat in his quarters, he felt very nervous about the result, and small blame to him. I myself, being at that time in the College corps, more given to the parade than the lecture room, and much more disposed to Mars than Minerva, remember well when under orders to march at an hour's notice, into the county of Wicklow, and overthrow a gathering of insurgents that were said to be encamped in the mountains—I say, I well remember that my heart palpitated, though my step was firm and assured, when we in gallant array marched forth from the gate of Old Trinity.

Reader, I assure you, I partook of no little confusion of mind, though I smiled contemptuously at the trepidating ignorance of my next in rank, who

when ordered to load with ball cartridge, inquired most anxiously of me, as his right hand man, which end of the cartridge he should send down foremost. I state this to account in some measure for the nervousness of Captain B—— of the Mayo militia—and dwelling, as his mind did on the previous discomfiture and massacre of the king's troops that took place at Oulart, Blackstairs, and other places in Wexford, he worked himself up to the conviction that he would never see the end of another day, and that either a rebel's pike or bullet would leave him a bloody corpse on the battle-field. Under this wearing down impression, he thought it best, as perhaps no one else would do it, to signify to his mother in Mayo, the fatal termination of her eldest hopes' career, and accordingly he sat down and penned the following epistle :—

“ Dear Mother,—I write to tell you that this day, under the command of General ——, our regiment in brigade, with several other corps, attacked the strong position of the rebels on Vinegar Hill : determined as I was to fight valiantly, and as one worthy of my seed and breed—I did all that man could do ; I led on my men to the charge ; I breasted a plateau of pikes, and bore without flinching, the blazing discharge of cannon and musquetry. But toward the close of the day, when the numbers of insurgents became too overpowering, and when led on by French officers, they made a combined rush upon our troops, then it was that I received a pike through my heart, and I know not after that how the contest ended—but I fear disastrously. I now lie on the

field of honour—and hope, as an officer and a gentleman, if the enemy hold possession of the field of battle, which I am sure they will do, that I will get a decent burying, and not be left to the dogs, pigs, and scald crows. Dear mother, as this is the last time you will ever hear from me, till we meet in glory, mind as my last words, the following directions. Don't turn out on the wide world poor Molly M'Cor-mick and the children; though we were together in a way that was not lawful or right, yet she was decent and true to me. Brother Rory of course will get the farm; tell him, with my blessing, to give Molly a cabin, and a potato-garden; tell him I would rather he would not sell the chesnut mare, without having a foal out of her; she's of the right sort, and he knows how she carried me at the Crosmolina steeple chase; tell him, as he don't care for shooting, and has other fish to fry, to give Basto the pointer to Cousin Tom. I advise him to be careful of the fodder, for after this dry summer the cattle will be badly off for winter keep. Blessings be with you, dear mother, and these are the last words of your affectionate son,—*after death*,—A. B."

Said A. B. did not, according to his anticipations, fall at Vinegar Hill, and for the best of reasons, that, though his regiment joined in the onslaught **HE** did not, for he got a colic just as the engagement commenced, and retired under a little bridge, where the state of his inner man kept him until the insurgents were dispersed,—the officer next in command led on his company. However, the letter he had

written was despatched, and arrived in due course according to its direction, and the mother, a worthy, ignorant, puzzle-pated woman, never taking into account the absurdity of a man announcing by letter his own death, and never suspecting a hoax, in her distress and consternation, immediately sent to her landlord and neighbour, Mr. R—— an account of her bereavement, and to show him how it had occurred, enclosed him the identical letter. This arrived after dinner, when a pleasant party of young people were grouped in the drawing-room, and, as Mr. R—— was weak-sighted and not disposed to read letters in the dusk of the evening, he consigned the epistle just handed to him to my friend, at that time a jolly, jocose, mischief-loving wight, to read out; this he did, and while reading, the extreme absurdity of a man announcing his own death, struck him so forcibly that he could not resist bursting into a roar of laughter, in which all the young people in the room most heartily joined; while the old gentleman, a kind and feeling but hasty man, who perceived that the death of a person he knew well was announced, and who, from deafness and growing infirmity, did not at once catch up the self-contradiction of the letter, actually was so enraged at the seeming heartlessness of the young people laughing at such a melancholy event, that he in his rage and indignation flung his crutch at the head of the reader, who had chosen to be comic on so melancholy an occasion. When in due time the militia captain's death was contradicted, and of course an-

other letter satisfied his mother and his neighbours that he was in the land of the living, neither the mother nor her old friend Mr. R—— liked to hear of the epistle that they listened to as coming from a corpse.



## CHAPTER IX.

Downpatrick Head—Seals—A question, are they now caught?—Answered by a story—Darby O'Dowd and his Grandfather—Better be a Seal than a Shark—A change of company—Description of the Headland of Downpatrick—Holy places—Shoeing of St. Patrick's Ass—The Saint a teacher of Navigation—A stronghold of the Vikingyr—A great convulsion—The broken-off fort, who was the builder ???—A digression about human destructiveness—Anecdote concerning Staffa, a Kittywake, and a cruel smoker—A rather long talk, which of course, reader, you will skip, if disposed to yawn—Arguments of a geologist, an antiquarian, and a legendary—The Paganee King—The Danish Captain—Ancient convulsions—Origin of fresh lakes—The Atlantidæ—The enchanted land—A native of it caught—Philosophy inimical to Enchantment—The spectre of the mountains—A mermaid—The King of the three Kingdoms beyond Ireland—His treatment of Watty O'Kelly.

It is time for me to go back to Downpatrick promontory and Poulrashanthana.

"I presume," said I, to my companion, "that there are many seals along a coast perforated by such caverns as this."

"Yes, certainly, and, taking them along with bird catching, was a favourite though dangerous occupation of the young people, but they have given up seal hunting for this some time."

Perceiving a sort of smile on my companion's countenance I asked, "And why?"

"You'd laugh, sir, if I told you the reason?"

"Then let me laugh, if you please, by all means."

"I don't exactly know whether it was in this Poulrashanthana, but it was in one of the caves that

are found between Downpatrick and Kilcummin Heads, and which can only be entered when the tide is out, and then you must use lights, and at all times it is fearfully dangerous, for there is a terrible swell even in the greatest calm, and if the wind was in the least to rise with a point to north or north-west, they and their boat would be ground to atoms. Well, on a calm fine evening, two young fellows had urged their curraghs into a cave where the seals were known to breed, and they had brought besides poles to knock down the creatures, plenty of dry bog fir to keep up a blaze, and having got far in, the place was alive with seals, and the poor things were toddling about amongst the round stones at the end, and the boys were busy enough striking them on the head, and all they could reach were finished off and ready to be brought out, when in the farthest end of the cavern, and sitting up on its bent tail in a corner, just as you may suppose a tailor would sit on his board, there sat a fellow, his head as round as a man's, and it looked white, shining, and bare, with a flat nose and two grey eyes just like an old fellow who was laid up past his labour in the chimney corner. So one of the boys was just making up to him to strike him down with his pole, when the seal cried out in a squeaking, snivelling, supplicating voice, 'Och, boys! och, ma bouchals! spare your old grandfather Darby O'Dowd.' You may suppose that the boys were not a little astonished and frightened when they heard a seal speak; but one of them plucking up courage, accosted the creature and said, 'Now, that is all a joke, you're no grandfather of ours,

for Darby O'Dowd is long ago, long ago in his grave, and God be merciful to him, he lies in Dunfeeny churchyard.' 'You may say that, and thrue it is for you, grandson Tim. It's thrue I was dead and dacently buried, but here I am for my sins, turned into a *sale*, as other sinners are and will be. See what comes of selling mangy sheep for sound bastes, and swearing away before a coort a neighbour's good name; and Heaven is just, and here I am making my purgathory as a *sale*, and if you put an end to me and skin me, as I see you are for, maybe it's worser I'll be, and go into a shark or a porpoise, or some fish that will never have the honour or glory of sitting as I do now on firm land. Mind my bidding then, boys avick; lave your ould forefather where he is, to live out his time as a sale. Maybe for your own sakes, for they say every dog has his day, you will ever hereafter leave off following and parsecuting and murthering sales, who may be nearer to yourselves nor you think.' It may be supposed that the young seal hunters gave up their occupation and left their grandfather alone; at all events, let there be what foundation for the story there may, it is universally believed, and on the strength of it the people have given up seal hunting."

I must continue my observations on Downpatrick, which I have twice visited; the first time in company with the very sensible and well-thinking man I have alluded to in this and another chapter. On my second visit I was received at the house of Lieutenant Sterne of the coast-guard, and from whom, though I had never before seen him, I received the greatest

possible kindness, and that kindness not confined to the comparatively passive exercise of hospitality in his house, but shown in his placing at my service his horses, jaunting-car, and servants ; so that by his means I have been able to go and return from places that would have been to me otherwise quite inaccessible. On my second visit to Downpatrick Head, I was attended by my two intelligent friends Lieutenant Henri of the coast-guard, and Mr. G. Crampton. I have already said that this headland, unlike most others, is not connected with the highlands of the interior by any ridge or chain of hills—on the contrary, the district of the Laggan in this quarter slopes gradually down to the shore, and then arises northward from the sea level in an inclined plane, consisting of about two hundred and eighty acres, which gradually ascends, forming a smooth green sward, until it terminates at the head in cliffs of about one hundred and fifty feet high. This green sward is in fine weather the place where patrons are held, and where the Irish, as they are all over the island so fond of mixing religious observances with frolicsome sport, go their holy rounds in honour of St. Patrick, and then their dancing rounds in honour of their sweethearts ; and where, all through the summer an old woman attends to show pilgrims how to do penance, and a fiddler or piper to provoke the penance doers to strike up a dance.

While proceeding to the extremity of the headland where is St. Patrick's altar and chapel, where is the ancient fortification, similar (but more extensive in its enclosure) to those I have described in Erris, we met many groups of idlers, a fiddler, and, apart from

the others, a couple of women that appeared to have come from far, to go through their religious duties.

We were now at St. Patrick's chapel, situated a few yards distant from the western spur of the cliff—a rude ruin, about forty by twenty feet square, the walls not more than four feet high ; a few shapeless heaps of stones inside, which are revered by pilgrims while going the rounds, and one in the north-west corner is of peculiar sanctity, and whose circuit has been marked by many a bloody knee, and honoured by many a low prostration. This is nothing else but one shapeless stone placed on another, and having some remote resemblance to that utensil used by smiths is called St. Patrick's Anvil. Here it was that, when he landed for the first time in Connaught, he shod the ass that was brought to him to sit on, (he was too humble to mount a horse,) with which he afterwards voyaged over Connaught, and rode to the foot of Croagh Patrick. Outside, and within a few yards of the north-west corner of the chapel, and conformable as Mr. Henri assured me to the true position of the points of the compass, is a structure about ten feet square, rising and lessening step by step to the height of ten feet, only that when getting near the top, the position of the angles changes, and they form themselves lozenge ways to those below them, so that if the lower tiers of the structure point to the cardinal points, the upper present angles so as to mark off four other points, namely, N. E., N. W., S. E., S. W. It might be supposed that the “stern riders” of those seas in the old time had made use of this simple structure for the purposes of navigation as well as religion ;



or might not St. Patrick, or he that is worshipped as such, be wise enough to instruct the natives in what was useful in this life, as well as what was conducive to their acceptance with God.

Eastward of this chapel and the altar, and where the headland goes into a sort of secondary promontory, with a narrow neck or isthmus—a wall is thrown across (evidently of remote antiquity), covered now with grey lichens, and greatly dilapidated, part of it continues about ten feet high, and it has an uniform thickness of about seven feet; towards its western end is a doorway, in front of which, and on either side, there are the remains of outworks and caserns in the wall, suited for defence and secrecy—this wall is terminated on either side by the precipice, and towards the eastern end there are evident signs that a portion of this fortification has gone down along with the cliff into the depths below. Within the enclosure made by the wall, there are no traces of building, but along the eastern side of the promontory, and as a protection for man and cattle, from the perpendicular cliff, there is an earthen breastwork which does not exist at the western side, but seems to terminate abruptly—as if it *had* existed, but like the western extremity of the wall, has gone down.

About two hundred yards to the north-west of the enclosed promontory stands Dunbrista, or the off broken doon or fort, standing out of the boiling sea, about one hundred and fifty feet perpendicular, and rather wider at top than below, and all its faces so smooth as to be utterly inaccessible—standing there

composed of stratified limestone and calpe, with the beds almost horizontal, but dipping gently from north to south, and causing the islet to rise with the gradual ascent of the whole headland, so as to form the highest point of the whole slope. There Dunbrista stands like a great cylinder set in the sea, and on its flat top, containing, as I should suppose, an area of half an acre,\* are the remains of buildings. With the naked eye you can discover them plainly, and by means of a telescope better; and you observe the walls of an oblong building—as far as may be guessed about twenty feet by fifteen—in the middle of that side of the building, looking towards the mainland, there is a doorway; you see the dressed faces of the large stones forming the jambs of the entrance, which is constructed like all the ancient doorways I am acquainted with in Ireland, without any reveals, and narrowing from the bottom upwards.

To the westward again of the larger building, you see another smaller one just at the edge of the western cliff, and all in ruins. Behind the larger building, and as it were protecting it from the blast, is an earthen mound, overhanging the northern cliff, and the mound is evidently a continuation of that which, on the fortified promontory on the mainland, verges towards the western cliff. Here, then, we have works raised by the hand of man, on a spot that has been, time out of mind, altogether inaccessible, upon which the hardest bird-nest hunter that ever climbed a cliff never has ventured to go, and where, for

\* The ordnance survey makes it 2 roods and 21 perches.

ages upon ages, the sea birds bring out their young in security. Indeed, as I looked with my telescope on the interesting spot, it was pleasant to see the gull and gannett sitting so securely, with all their feathers swollen out as it were in comfortable dishabille, (just, reader, as I sit loose and careless in my study,) and setting at nought all human attempts to disturb their well-chosen nursery. It would appear that the larger gulls have usurped this safe platform for themselves, and why should not they have possession—strength making property for them—as well as for the Milesians, the Danes, the Normans, the Cromwellians amongst mankind. So the kittiwakes, the loons, the sea parrots, and all the other innumerable tribes that live upon the ocean, they must be content with the slight ledges of the strata, that rise tier over tier to compose this fragmented islet—and, alas! poor kittiwakes, though nobody can catch, the bullet can reach you, and it is a sad specimen of man's natural destructiveness to see a cruel fellow with his gun killing, maiming, and inflicting death and agony upon a poor useless, as well as harmless creature of God.

There was a boat load of fowlers of this sort rowing round Dunbrista, while we were on the mainland cliff, and popping away at the poor incubating creatures, and the slaughtered mother comes every now and then tumbling down, and leaves her young to the hawk and eagle, while the reckless sportsman laughs over the dying throes of the animal as it struggles in the water.

I remember some years ago, going from Derry in a steamboat, on an excursion to Staffa and Iona. Well,

we all arrived at Staffa early on a July morning, and the whole human, and some inhuman contents of the vessel set out for Fingal's Cave, that wonder of nature, where the Almighty has exhibited a pilared magnificence, combining the sublime with the beautiful, which man must seek to imitate in vain. Now just at the entrance of the inimitable gothic entrance, and at the apex of the arch, in an aperture, cut, as it were, to make it more light and elegant—in the very key-stone, a kittiwake had fixed her nest, and there she sat on her callow brood, when this hoard of felicity hunters burst in on her peaceful abode, and so poor kittiwake must needs put out her long neck to see what was coming. It was a curious crowning to this noble arch to see this bird, like some gothic extravaganza ornament, in the very apex of it. Many of us were admiring this additional item to the interest of the whole scene, when a tall, dirty, over-whiskered, cigar-smoking fellow, who must needs show to the ladies how killing he was, levels his fowling-piece, and in a trice the poor kittiwake came toppling off her nest, and was gasping in the agonies of death on the surface of the emerald water.

I do not think I ever felt more vexed or offended : the wanton act of this cruel man completely did away with the solemn complacent wonder and admiration which Fingal's Cave is calculated to excite ; my whole feelings were jarred to vexation, and I believe I made a resolution never again to visit one of nature's wonders in company with a steam-boat crowd. In the same manner I wished the boat's

crew of wanton bird-slayers, far away from Dunbrista. But, as it was, the sight was magnificent : the green transparent sea, heaving in all its unruffled calmness ; the precipices all around shining in the sun, and presenting such a multitude of tints along their stratified surfaces ; here a dark bed of calpe, above it again a thick stratum of blue limestone ; then a line of brown feruginous matter, and perpendicular to these horizontal layers were streaks of white, yellow, orange lichens. - On every ledge, sea-birds of every colour sat incubating, while aloft in air multitudes were on the wing, wheeling, quivering, soaring, and sending up their many-toned voices of terror, wrath, or anguish, as they witnessed the destruction of their mates and young ones by the fowlers below.

When as near as the mainland will allow of approach to Dunbrista, it looks to be of the shape of a lozenge—at a greater distance it looks like a cylinder ; the water seems deep around it, and as I was informed, the soundings give between six and eight fathoms. Sitting down on the cliff just opposite to it, the sun shining bright, but not too hot, the air, being cooled by a very gentle breeze that came off land, and had no power to ruffle the water, protected as it was by the high cliffs, my very intelligent friends and I commenced a disquisition on the past state of Dunbrista Rock, which stood before us, with its remains of human industry and art, though it is, and has been for ages, inaccessible ; as our conversation continued for some time, and as the substance of it may not be uninteresting to *some* of my readers, in



order to avoid the repetition of *says I* and *says he*, I will cast the discussion into the form of a conversation.

*C. O.*—That island *must* once have been joined to the mainland—the buildings on it—the character of their lichen-covered stones—the similarity of the doorway to that of the chapel on the mainland,—the abrupt termination of the mound on the mainland, and the appearance again of it in the same line on the island, all convince me that Dunbrista formed, in ancient time, a portion of the fortified promontory to the eastward.

*G. C.*—The tradition of the people bears out what you say, for they have it that it was one stronghold belonging to a foreign and PAGANEE KING, as they call him, who roamed the country over, and with his cruel crew plundered, racked, and ruined the surrounding district—and so the cry of the suffering people came to the ears of holy St. Patrick, and he was not long in coming to the succour of the afflicted, and arriving, as he did, by boat from Ballysadare, in the county of Sligo, he landed at the cursing stone at Kilcummin, where, afterwards, the French invaders disembarked, and proceeded to Downpatrick, and coming to where yonder altar now stands, he made his pious prayer to Him who can succour those who suffer wrong, and besought the all-merciful to abate this cruel tyranny; and so, while the saint was supplicating, the *Paganee King* came out of his stronghold, and seeing the venerable apostle on his knees, he cast his spear at him, which passed him by unharmed, and lit on that little mound just beside us, which is now one of the stations where

on their knees pilgrims go their rounds. Well, away went the Paganee King, after throwing his spear, which the haughty man did more in contempt than anger, to plunder and desolate, as was his wont, the surrounding country. But he had not gone far until he heard a crash, as if the solid earth was rending, and looking behind he saw that part of his fortress in which he had stowed all his gold and precious plunder, riven from the mainland, and standing as it now does, where no creature without wings can approach it. The tradition proceeds to state, that such was the horror and dismay of the sea king, that he came and fell at the feet of the saint, abjured his false gods, and wicked life, and, in after days, became a bishop and a saint.

*C. O.*—And is the money there until this day? for as nothing without wings can come to disturb it, it may be supposed that the gulls and gannets have not appropriated it.

*G. C.*—Why some say it is there, others say not; for that about a hundred years ago a ship from the country of the Paganee king, and bearing Danish colours, one fine day approached Dunbrista, and waiting until the wind blew in a favourable manner, the captain flew a kite over the island, so that the line crossed it and reached the mainland. He then let the kite quietly fall, sent men on shore to catch the cord, by means of it drew up a rope, which lay across Dunbrista, and with the half of it the captain and some hardy men got up, dug where an old parchment told them to excavate, found and carried off a heap of gold.

*C. O.*—Well, ascribing to the legend as much

credit as it deserves, there is one circumstance worth noting, which is, that tradition asserts, as in this story, a sudden disruption; *that*, coupled with its name, which in Irish signifies the broken-off fort, induces me to believe that the separation was caused by a sudden convulsion. I hold that though traditions are not by any means to be depended on in their details, there is always some foundation for them, and there *is* some FACT, however in transmission it may be distorted and magnified.

*A. H.*—Well, though I allow there cannot be a doubt as to the fact of this Dunbrista being at one time attached to the mainland—the evident continuation of the wall and the mound, the similarity of the buildings, the conformity of the stratifications of the isle and the mainland, all these set the matter at rest—but that it was torn away by a violent and immediate shock, I very much question, and the conformity of the island with the mainland, in its stratification, strengthens me in my opinion. I am altogether disposed to consider that the sound was caused by the disintegration of a trap-dyke, or by the sea having formed a cavern, the roof of which eventually fell in, as we have seen to be the case in the Poul-nashan-thana, which we left just behind us. In support of the opinion that it was caused by the disintegration of a trap-dyke, I would call the notice of any geologist to the similar process which has gone on at Moista Sound, and at the natural arch at Porturlin. Now this my theory is supported by the additional *fact*, that this Downpatrick Head is all honey-combed with caverns, the roofs of which have given

way in some places, and which form what are either called pigeon holes or blowing holes : time may have produced also this great chasm which has been well called the Giant's Leap.

G. C.—Giant's Leap! Is that what this sound is called?

A. H.—Yes; and the name reminds me of a version of the tradition somewhat different from the fact of the great sea king being converted by St. Patrick, and becoming a bishop; for my story book has it, that seeing the separation of his stronghold, and the obstacle that now presented itself between him and his treasures, he made a leap as it were, to spring over; but, big as he was, he came short of his mark, and went down, as he deserved, into the boiling surge.

C. O.—Well, now, Mr. H., as a seaman you have every right to know the immense force of the ocean, beating and boiling as it does under the sway of winds that for the greater part of the year urge their uncontrolled vigour across the Atlantic towards this coast; yet, making all allowance for *this*, I cannot be persuaded that even such a power could have formed so wide and deep a sound,—no, not even were that power seconded by the disintegration and removal of a trap-dyke. By the gradual process which you believe in, I would ask, how many thousands of years would be required to cause this perfect separation? how ancient must have been the people who constructed yonder buildings; they certainly must have been ante-diluvians; besides, where is the trap-dyke that you suppose to be worn away here? where

is it to be seen at any point of the coast, east or west? Archdeacon Verschoyle, in his admirable treatise on the geology of the coast of Mayo, lays down no such dyke; which, if it existed at all, must have shown itself somewhere westward between Pig Island and Porturlin, or eastward, in Sligo Bay. Besides, I repeat, who ever heard of a trap-dyke two hundred yards thick? I have seen one in Donegal fifty feet; but you must know that there is not one visible on this coast that is five yards in thickness.

*A. H.*—You mistake me, if you suppose that I considered that there was a dyke of any such size; but you should be aware that wherever a dyke is, that by the protrusion of the igneous matter from below, the rock, on either side, whether it be primitive or secondary, is, to a certain extent, altered in its nature, often decomposed by the combined effect of high temperature and pressure, and that it is not so much on the trap-dyke itself as on the adjoining disintegrated rock that the sea has powerful operation, and causes those caverns and fissures that are so frequent on this coast; the sides first give way, and then the dyke goes to ruin, when unsupported by the wall of rock on either side.

*C. O.*—Your theory may account for the pigeon-holes and caverns you allude to; but still I maintain that it is not competent to solve the difficulty *here*: because, in the first place, there is no trace of any such dyke; in the next, if there were, it would have taken too much time, *consistent with the history of man*, to work out this chasm, and cause the decided separation here so evident; and thirdly, there are no



remains in the rocks below to show that any such dyke ever existed. As then you allow that such a separation has taken place, and *that* since the country was peopled, I hold that it must have been effected by some earthquake, and though I am not aware that any of the Irish annals make mention of this particular event, yet there are numerous circumstances recorded, which go to prove that great changes must have taken place on the surface of the land we inhabit.

“The Annals of the Four Masters” mention the formation of sundry lakes and rivers, the falling down of mountains—an event of the latter nature is stated by O’Flaherty to have occurred in the seventeenth century in the adjoining county of Sligo,—the comparatively recent formation of lakes, as for instance Loughs Neagh and Erne, must have been caused by the sinking of the land, such sinkings must have caused great disruptions. In my “Tour in Connaught,” describing the Isle of Achill, I mentioned the marks of a great and sudden breakage, as evident in the fissures behind the precipice of Slieve Croghan; I have observed since that the same fissures and enormous dislocations in crack behind crack, on Benwee, westward of Portnacloy, and at Slieve Leam, in the county of Donegal; and it is not only along the coast, but inland, I have observed such chasms on the sides of Knock na Ree and Benbulbin; chasms, that could not have been caused by water, but evidently the consequence of some great heaving disruption, and consequent falling away of these enormous masses. Need I say more to support my theory that Ireland, even since it

became the habitation of man, has been the scene of great and violent changes of surface.

Some years ago, in going from Derry to Ramelton, across the southern end of the peninsula formed by Loughs Foyle and Swilly, near Castle Forward, I saw a lake reduced by many feet from its ancient level by the means of a cut through the side of a hill,—mind, not through a bog or morass, but through a gravel hill, and in the centre of that lake there appeared, for the first time, an island, with a small castle erected on it. That castle must have been in existence, previous to the sinking of the surface by which the lake was formed. I mention this circumstance as showing how men were in Ireland before the lake was formed, leaving out of consideration the numberless instances I have witnessed of oak trees (trees which in no case are known to grow in flooded places) being found with their roots planted, and their stems lying at the bottom of lakes, and tide waters in Ireland.

*A.H.*—I am not persuaded yet as to *your* being right and my being wrong, respecting this disruption of Dunbrista. I allow that there are all along this coast evident marks of some great devastating agency from below; the existence of the numerous trap-dykes by which the whole of this district is intersected as by so many arteries, the singular contortion of its stratification, particularly at Fohercloihean Point, near Port-urlin,—these, and many other circumstances connected with this, to a geologist, very interesting district, all these show the effect of igneous agency; but this was, as I take it, long before this globe was made fit for the habitation of man, long before the mason, whoever

he was, laid the foundations of those buildings now before us.

*C. O.*—I give up the task of persuading a man against his will ; but, in the meantime, allow me to hold at least the reins of my own hobby-horse, ay, and mount and ride away where I list. Holding, as I do, that Ireland was once an integral part of the Atlantis, and that the continent that is now in a great measure submerged, and its eastern remnants only exposed in the Azores, Canary and Madeira Islands, and its western, in Ireland, was once the fatherland of those Atlantidæ or Celts that were the earliest colonizers of Britain, France and Spain ; who left as their religious remains Stonehenge, Abury, and Carnac ; whose circles, cromleachs, and altars still increase in number the farther you go westward, and which, within a few miles of the place where we now sit, are in such multitudes, I mean at Mulla Cross.

*G. C.*—Talking of your Atlantis which, as being a sunken land, is the oldest tradition of Western Europe,\*

\* Mr. Whitehurst, after having proved that all basaltes are lava, observes, "doubts may arise with respect to the origin of the Basaltes or Giant's Causeway in Ireland, since no visible crater, nor the least vestige of an extinguished volcano, are now remaining, except the substances before-mentioned, from whence such immense torrents could have flowed as are now spread over so great a part of the north of Ireland.

"These circumstances render it necessary to observe, that whoever attentively views and considers these romantic cliffs, together with the exterior appearances of that mountainous cliff, will, I presume," says he, "soon discover sufficient cause to conclude, that the crater from whence that melted matter flowed, together with an immense tract of land towards the north, have been absolutely sunk and swallowed up into the

and which you, C. O., have stated in your "Tour in Connaught" is believed in by the Portuguese, the natives of Biscay, of the Azores, and Canary islands, and which is a matter of faith, and with some of sight, to most of the people of Erris. I presume it is also talked of here in the Laggan.

earth, at some remote period of time, and became the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean;—a period indeed much beyond the reach of any historical monument, or even of tradition itself.

"But though it does not appear that any human testimony or record has been handed down to us, concerning such a tremendous event, yet the history of the fatal catastrophe is faithfully recorded in the Book of Nature, and in a language and character equally intelligible to all nations, therefore will not admit of a misinterpretation,—I mean those stupendous cliffs which environ a part of the Atlantic Ocean.

"These are characters which cannot mislead, and the consideration of such disasters, together with that of the cause still subsisting under the bottom of that immense ocean, almost persuade me to conclude that Ireland was originally a part of the island of Atlantis; which, according to Plato in his *Timæus*, was totally swallowed up by a prodigious earthquake, in the space of one day and night, with all its inhabitants and a numerous host of warlike people, who had subdued a great part of the then known world.

"The same observation is made by the ingenious and Rev. Mr. Hamilton, in his letters concerning the Giant's Causeway. The promontories of Antrim bear very evident marks of some violent convulsion which has left them standing in their present abrupt situation; and that the island of Ràhery, and some of the western islands of Scotland, do really appear like the surviving fragments of a country, great part of which might have been buried in the ocean.

"To this let us add the tradition of the old Irish. They say great part of this island was swallowed by the sea, and that the sunken part often rises, and is to be seen on the horizon frequently from the northern coast. On the north-west of the island this part so appearing is called Tir Hudi, or the county of Hud; that it contains a city which once possessed all the riches of the world, the key of which lies buried under some Druidical monument."—Page 51, Introduction to *Valancey's Vindication of the Ancient History of Ireland*.

*A. H.*—To be sure it is : the general belief here is, that it extends from Teeling Head northward to the Stags of Broadhaven, and that it goes out westward by north until it reaches half-way to America. My commissioned boatman, J. A., informs me that when he was residing with his friends in this vicinity, about twelve years ago, a woman named Lavelle asserted positively, that she had seen it from the rocks on which she had been gathering carigeen ; that it was a delightful country, hill and valley. She could see the sheep on the hills, the cattle in green pastures, and even the people's clothes drying on the hedges. And another boatman of mine, a county of Sligo man, corroborates the assertion of J. A. by the following story :—

“ A man living at the adjoining village of Ballycastle, saw the sunken land twice, at an interval of seven years ; and had he seen it a third time at another interval of seven years, he would have been the person who would have the honour and happiness of disenchanting it, and firmly believing that he was the person predestined to fix it over the water, so that it should never more vanish away. This assurance had such an effect on the man, that it made him talk of nothing else, and indeed unfitted him from doing any thing. But, alas ! on the eve of the day on which the fated seven years were to expire, the man himself expired ; and so the disenchantment was not effected. But this is nothing to what my own servant, Owen Gallagher, a native of this district, has told me ; for he assures, me that not only has the sunken land been seen, but that one of its inhabitants has been caught ;



and thus was the singular event brought about : A dacent knowledgeable woman, by name Biddy Toole, now alive and to the fore to prove I am no liar, —was one day gathering DEELISK on the rocks, and a boat passing by in which was her own brother, she asked them to land her on a little islet that was not far off, where there was plenty of what she wanted, and to call for her again when they were returning from fishing. This they agreed to do ; and accordingly in stepped Biddy into the boat. But no sooner had they got her on board, but, for mischief-sake, and because Biddy was gay and pleasant, and could with song and story keep up their spirits they took her off with them to the fishing-ground, and let down the lines. So, after fishing some time, one of them got a *tremendous bite*, and having hauled in his line with great difficulty, and, to the amazement of his boat-mates, he jerked in a live child !—it was a little green and fishy-looking, to be sure, on the skin,—and why shouldn't it ? but, for all the world, it was nothing differing from what would come of Christians. Indeed, it soon proved itself so ; for you may be well sure it was as much afraid of the boatmen, as they were astonished at it ; and fear with it had a consequence which it not seldom has with those on dry land ; for the little man (he was a male) gave a very convincing proof of intense fear, and so the fishermen — not knowing what to do with the *prize*, and not certainly desiring him — immediately threw him overboard, when he gave one kick, and dived to the bottom, as gay as a schoolboy escaping from the blackhole. You may be sure he never took a bait

again. But this is not all: Biddy Toole told my informant, that the man who hooked the enchanted child and then let him go, died within a year, though up to the hour of his death, he was as hale a man as any in Tyrawly."

*C. O.*—I think this tradition of a sunken land every now and then appearing, though like every other founded on the actual event of the submersion of the Atlantis, is corroborated and kept alive by the optical illusion which a certain state of the atmosphere presents on these coasts. I was myself a witness to the appearance of land rising out of the sea near the Giant's Causeway, which phenomenon I described some years ago in the pages of the "Christian Examiner."

*A. H.*—Yes, and I have witnessed what was very similar here, and not only as connected with the sea but as inland; and I will describe what I saw as in a great measure solving the mystery. Some years ago, I was crossing the mountains on a very foggy night, with a large party of the coast-guard, the leading man carrying a large lantern, to enable us to direct our steps by a clue of large white quartz stones, which I had caused to be placed at regular intervals through the hills, to show the path and to prevent accidents at night and in misty weather. We travelled in high spirits, sometimes singing and whistling to keep up our courage, till we came to the summit of a mountain, when, to our dismay, we saw ourselves surrounded by several gigantic figures, that steadily followed our movements—hopping over drains and tussocks when we hopped, and occasionally measuring their lengths in the bog

when we ourselves unavoidably did the same. Many of my men did not at all relish the strange company, and the singing subsided ; and I believe no man could, even if he would, screw his mouth into a whistle. Indeed, I have my doubts, had we been fewer in number, whether they would ever have recovered from the effects of their terror. As for myself, having never observed any thing of a similar nature before, I was for a time much perplexed to account for the phenomenon ; but, after a little consideration, I did explain it to myself quite satisfactorily : and what delighted me still more was, that I considered what I now witnessed enabled me to account for the well-known German illusion, called the “Spectre of the Brocken,” or the *dæmon* of the Hartz ; and, from an account of the same which I have since read, I find I was perfectly right in my conjecture. Had the circumstance occurred when there were but one or two timid persons to witness it, what a marvellous tale would have been the result. Query—with the assistance of the sun on the horizon and a fog-bank off the coast is not the sight of the enchanted island accounted for ?

*C. O.*—Oh, but what say you to the young gentleman, he was no fog-bank ? I thought I heard you say he gave evident testimony that he was no spectre.

*A. H.*—When I was a prisoner of war with that brave Dutchman, Admiral Rickert, I heard him one day tell a large party at his table, and pledge his word for the accuracy of his statement, that when he was a lieutenant of a frigate, and cruising off, what coast I forget, a mermaid remained close to the vessel for a considerable time, and all on board had an

opportunity of observing her ; that some of the officers wished to fire at her, but that the captain would not permit it, because the creature bore so strong a resemblance to a handsome woman.

G. C.—You have said, Mr. H., that there is some reality in this sunken land, which is kept so unfairly by ENCHANTMENT from the use and occupation of the overflowing population of Ireland. What a safety valve would be lifted for our explosive Paddys, if we had a far west as well as the Yankees for our swarms. But until the reality comes, I can tell you that imagination has revelled in these forthcoming prairies, and if you believe our Mayo poets, or imaginator, the king of these hidden realms has been conversed with, and he no doubt tired of his *incognito* has come on firm Irish land, and held very tempting conversations with certain people thereon. He has appeared diminutive, to be sure, as all fairies are, but of pleasant presence, dressed right royally—he speaks of his kingdom as the “Thalore tha whouy Druid-haigh”—a fine arable and wooded country, much better than the Laggan, and if so, an Eden in comparison of Erris ; in the middle of it there is a castle fortified and lofty, crowning a hill like Nephin. This fortress is called Monaster Ladhra—giants armed at all points with their caparisoned horses, standing in stables fast asleep, but waiting to be awoke, by the sound of a great bell suspended from a tower on the top of the hill, every seven years. It is allowed to be seen by some of the natives of Ireland, and occasionally its king is permitted to appear in our country, and he calls himself “ Muiganogh Faigh

Ree," which signifies " King of the three kingdoms behind," that is beyond Ireland. It is supposed, that if *rightly* asked, this hide-and-go-seek potentate will tell the questioner where he can find untold heaps of gold, but the querist must be very particular, for if he ask as he should do, the wealth will be obtained by the one, and the enchantment will be removed by the other; but if not, the king vanishes never to return, amidst wild laughter resounding from the ocean wave, at the folly of him who might have wealth, but had not the wit to win it.

Now, there was a man in the northern quarter of the Mullet, whose name was Watty O'Kelly. None had more acres in the peninsula, except it were the great landlords entirely; but what signified that to Watty? for he was a man for turning all into liquor, and liquor, every one knows, has a knack of its own of flowing away, when the cock is always a turning. So Watty's acres floated away, and when he became poor, and not a keg, let alone a barrel was to be found in his keeping with any thing stronger in it than buttermilk, he thought of what an old woman once told him, that he should go in search of the " King of the three kingdoms behind," and maybe HE would tell him where he would find gold. So he goes to the cliff that hangs, on the mainland, over Eagle Island, and sending courage down into himself along with a drop, so that he saw double and talked thick, and using some spell, whose import I now do not know—he invoked the presence of Muiganogh Faigh Ree, who in a trice appeared, and the bards narrate the following dialogue as taking place, which



is, I must allow, tame, prosaic, and inconsequent in English, but has its verbal beauty, as well as its pointed meaning in Irish—and by the way, it must be to C. O. an additional proof that the sunken land once formed part of Ireland, that its king seems to speak just as good Irish as any Connaught man.

“*King*—The Fairies bless you, Watty O’Kelly.”

“*Wat.*—May God and Mary bless me <sup>(1)</sup>”—(this is repeated three times).

“*King*—Is it wealth <sup>(2)</sup> you’re looking for, Watty O’Kelly?”

“*Wat.*—No, but a calf of a bull <sup>(3)</sup> that strayed from me”—(this is said also thrice).

“*King*—The back of good luck to you, Watty O’Kelly, and seven generations after you.”

“*Wat.*—Is it any harm to ask you who you are?” says Watty O’Kelly.

“*King*—None in life ; I’m King of the three Kingdoms behind. And each of these three times larger than Ireland. And that’s your share of them, Watty O’Kelly.”

To understand and appreciate the above poem, whose spirit depends on the similarity of sounds in the Irish language having very different meanings—taking this into consideration, the mistake will be understood, that O’Kelly made in not saying “you” instead of “me,” at the mark <sup>(1)</sup>, which is done in the Irish, by the least inflection of the voice. A further belief is, that if the enchanted man gets rid of the riches of which he knows the place of concealment, his time of enchantment is ended. So the second mistake O’Kelly makes is, not assenting

to the second question of Muiganogh—the point of these verses is increased by the similarity of the Irish for “riches” and “bull,” as if O’Kelly had unintentionally misunderstood the offer, things having turned out “contrary” so far, and the enchanted man not being allowed to make any more offers at release, he vents his execrations on Walter, tells who he is, and vanishes in a clap of thunder.

## CHAPTER X.

Still at Downpatrick—Two devotees' worship of the Anvil, whence were forged the shoes of St. Patrick's Ass—My friend Trap-dyke's theory comes to a fault—Ballyglen—Fin M'Coul's finger stone—An old Castle—A high Altar—A curiously formed hill—A good building material—Old Irish Architects no fools—A picturesque view—A poor family's destruction—A widow's lodge—A blessed well—Speculation about the geological formation of this Glen—Setting out on second Visit to Erris—Druidical remains, peculiarly abundant along the North Western coast of Ireland—Now in possession of "the Gentry"—Their cruel treatment of a poor man whose spirit was not equal to his love—Church of Dunfeeny—Pillar stone—Cliffs of Tyrawly—A Tourist taken for a poacher—How to conciliate an old woman.

SUCH was the gist of our conversation as we sat on the cliff of Downpatrick, the gentle breeze from the south-east cooling the ardours of the descending sun, which sinking as it was westward, told us it was time to start homewards, if we would do justice to a dinner that our hospitable entertainer had warned us would be on the table at an early hour, in order to afford us the opportunity of a stroll inland in the evening. So, giving a parting look at the cliff scenery of Downpatrick, beautifully varied as were now its caves and promontories by the lights and shadows of a summer's evening, we turned our steps inland and passing by St. Patrick's chapel, there lay prostrate before, what I have already mentioned as the Saint's Anvil, two women—there they lay flat, with their blue mantles thrown over them, their faces downwards, and head a little elevated towards the holy stone. I never witnessed

such a complete prostration—prostration, I may well say not only of body, but of mind, of humanity, of reason, of religion pure and undefiled. I had met these two women some hours before, they were evidently from some distant part, and had never been here before, and were on the look out for some one to direct them in the routine of performing the penances of the station. One was an aged creature, her face wrinkled and smoked almost as brown as the sods of turf over which she had sat until she had become so dried up and discoloured; and after all it was a gentle, complacent, confiding, affectionate sort of countenance she had; and her attire, though according to the old Mayo costume, a red petticoat, and brown boddice of woollen, was not ragged, and her linen and person were quite clean. I would take her to be the grand-dame of the girl who was in her company—a round-faced, comely, dark-eyed lass, with much meekness and timidity, amounting to suspicion in her deportment, and a tone of melancholy appearing to compose her features,—for while she stood by her aged attendant she heaved a sigh every now and then.

Observing them stand as it were irresolute, I addressed them, and the old woman, perhaps observing my attire more sober and clerical than that of others, returned my accost with apparent pleasure, but in the Irish language. I asked her could she speak English? She tried to do so, but her attempt was most imperfect, and mine at Irish was still worse; but she had her beads in her hand, and, pointing to the altar and the well, and the other stations within view, and

turning over some of the beads, she evidently was desirous that I should inform her as to the particulars of her duty. In the meantime, the young woman seemed to suspect that neither I nor any one else in company was the exact person to whom application *should* be made ; and she every now and then, while the old one was jabbering Irish over her beads, gave her a pull of the gown, and I think I heard her mutter the word “Sassenach,” and could gather that she was warning the other that she was in the company of those who were not the right sort. Yet I desire it to be understood that neither I nor any one in my company attempted to mock these simple creatures. Unable to converse in consequence of the difference of language, we had no power of convincing them of their error, and felt we had no right to cast ridicule, or even the appearance of distrust, on what was evidently devout, the soul of anxious seeking ; sincere piety was beaming from the countenance of the younger, and there was honest, undoubting, simple confidence in that of the older. They both, poor things, were anxious to do something satisfactory in the eye of heaven ; and, alas ! in their ignorance were inquiring, “wherewith shall I come before the Lord, or bow myself before the most High God ?” And it was not for us, as we could afford no better, to despise what we felt contained one element, at any rate, of the sacrifice which God accepts—a sincere and single-hearted devotedness.

I gave the old woman a small piece of silver as a token of respect, and quickly withdrew, receiving at the



same time a gentle smile from the maiden,—as much as to say, “I thank you, sir, for leaving us to ourselves, and to our duty.” I confess it was very painful to me to have these women come under my observation again, performing an act of superstition so degrading to the pure religion of the Gospel of Him who is the way, the truth, and the life, as thus to lie prostrate, as would a Hindoo, before a shapeless stone.

Passing again by the Poulmashanthana, we took our way along the edge of the cliff and coasted it along, until we arrived at the south-western mouth of this great sea cave: and here we stopped for a time to observe a stratum of yellow sandstone almost horizontal, still having its dip conformable to the underlying limestone and calpe from north to south. None of us pretended to be exact geologists, but we admired, as the half-informed are apt to do, at the sandstone overlying the limestone here; and, upon looking more closely at the mouth of the cave, we observed there was a sudden disruption of the continuity of the strata of both the sandstone and subjacent limestone, and that the line of the respective stratifications was many feet lower on one side of the cave than at the other. This, in miners’ phrase is, I believe, called a fault, and certainly denotes that since the original consolidation of the strata, a disruption had taken place of continuity, and one part had sunk, or the other had risen by some great and sudden force. I begged leave to suggest to my friend Mr. Henri that his Neptunian theory of the formation of this sea cave, and consequently of the separation

of Dunbrista, was very much the worse for the wear when brought to the test of this fault at the western end of Poulmashanthana.

I had not done with Ballycastle yet: so, taking advantage of an evening still finer than the day, we proceeded southward from the village along a beautiful mountain vale, called Ballyglen, prettily ornamented on its western side with trees of some size; and as this is the nearest spot to Erris on which a sizable tree is found growing, I believe it is here the circumstance is reported to have occurred to the Errisman, who, seeing for the first time in his life a tree, fell down and worshipped it as something super-earthly.

A pretty stream meanders through this smiling valley; a large and well-placed rath guards its opening seaward. Westward, is a small gentleman's seat, prettily planted and divided. Eastward, on the side of the hill or mountain, is one of the largest granite boulders I have seen anywhere. It is fully as large as a poor man's cabin, and must have required an amazing force to roll it along, and still a more amazing and unaccountable stoppage to arrest it on the side of an inclined plane, and say to it—"here you must stand at ease, and neither go onwards to the sea, nor downwards into the glen."

Tradition attributes here, as elsewhere, every thing good to St. Patrick, and every thing grand to Fin M'Coul. This stone is a memorial of what was entirely good, and only partially great; for it is *believed* when St. Patrick was building his chapel, and other holy places at Downpatrick, Fin M'Coul,

supposing he wanted stones, though certainly, as far as I could see, he had them in plenty and to spare at hand; at any rate, Fin, if for nothing else but to show his good will, took up this stone from the top of Nephin mountain, and hurled it off, intending it to light on Downpatrick, but it fell short of its mark, because, perhaps, Fin was not all out, as Ossian allows, a good Christian; and there it lies on the side of Ballyglen.

About half a mile further on, there is on the western side of the stream an old castle planted on a hillock—a strong position indeed at the period of its erection, and that period is more remote than that to be assigned to most of the square towers so plentiful throughout Ireland. What induces me to consider that it is older than those erected by the Cromwellian conquerors is, that the ascent to the upper stories is not by a spiral stone staircase, but by an inclined plane formed in the width of the wall, and paved with small stones. Over one of the windows is some inscription, which neither I nor any of my companions were able to decipher. We excused our inability by pleading a defect of light, for the sun was gone down. On the top of this fortalice, its Roman Catholic owner is said to have erected an altar, the remains of which still exist, but which we did not observe, for we were in haste to examine one of the most extraordinary calcareous formations in Ireland, or perhaps any where else.

A few hundreds yards from the castle is a hill of about one hundred feet in height, and covering about two acres of ground, composed of yellow calcareous

matter, somewhat deeper in colour than Portland stone, so light and porous that you can see through large pieces of it, and formed evidently by the deposit of calcareous matter held in solution by fresh water, and, as it was deposited, assuming the form of leaves, grass, twigs, and brushwood, through which the water must have percolated. It is nothing extraordinary to find in all our limestone districts a quantity of this tufa matter lining the channels and encrusting the edges of streams, especially where there is a waterfall. In Italy, the waters of many cascades are made use of in this way to make incrustations, and so take off the impression of medals. In Ireland, the old builders observing the lightness, and at the same time durability, of a similar material, used it to form the roofs of their crypts and the ornaments of their windows. I may instance that the stone roof of St. Dooloughs and Holm Patrick, near Dublin, are constructed of this material. What makes the place I am now describing remarkable is, the immense mass of it that is found here, and the consequent difficulty of accounting for its formation. The hill composed of it now covers, I think, two acres of ground: it was formerly much higher; for, independent of its being used to construct all the walls and fences in the vicinity, it is found to be an excellent manure, especially for mountain soils, and the people have been drawing it away for these many years.

It is as easily cut as chalk, for it is quite soft until it comes in contact with the atmosphere, and then it every year becomes harder and harder, and that rapidly, so much so that it is as permanent, if not more so, than the hardest blue limestone.

The people, in consequence of this hardness of the outside and softness within, in carrying it off have made excavations of great size and depth. Some of these are now used for the confining of cattle ; others have been occupied as human habitations ; others being carelessly scooped have fallen in, and this having often occurred, gives the whole hill now a most picturesque appearance, as a mass of mighty ruins. Some appear as blown up by gunpowder, and the fragments are lying and leaning together in magnificent confusion ; and as these fragments, some larger than any house, are covered with ivy, honeysuckle, sedums, and other parasitical plants, the rich yellow colour of the material contrasting with this varied verdure, it really is one of the most imposing sights that can well be seen.

Some years ago a man, setting a value on the shelter of this hill, built his cabin cleverly under one of its impending cliffs ; here he brought his wife and here he reared four fine children. A night of storm and much rain came on ; the neighbours heard a horrid crash in the night ; when morning came the poor man's house was not to be seen—over it lay an enormous section of the hill, broken into huge masses. Of course, the whole population assisted in digging out the poor people, and they succeeded in drawing out the corpses crushed and flattened ; the very brains driven out of the broken skulls by the force of the pressure. Nevertheless, I climbed and crept through the fissures, chasms, and excavations of this singular congeries, looking for specimens of the petrifications of which it was entirely composed : here im-



pressions of leaves elegantly accurate, masses of interlaced twigs, like the most elaborate filagree work ; here long stalactite fingers hanging down ; and here botroidal conformations, like bunches of yellow ripe grapes. In a word, suppose you, reader, the vagaries you may see of frostwork in woods and along cascades, when winter is in its force, and then you may imagine what a variety of solidifications of what was once in solution, is to be found here.

Well, as I was scrambling along, breaking off and loading myself with specimens, I came to where I saw smoke issue, and in an instant I was at the entrance of a residence, half cave, half hut, in which were a woman and two children ; the place was long and narrow, partly covered in by an impending ledge of the tufa rock, and partly by some sort of rude rafters and thatch ; the place was cleanly swept ; there were some rather decent articles of furniture in holes in the rock, which answered for cupboards, where were tea-cups, a few plates, and some spoons ; on one stone shelf were some cold boiled potatoes, a few eggs, and some salt ; and on another were a few books, some sadly torn : one looked like a New Testament, and on taking it up I found it was one. The woman, in the meantime, accosted me with civility, wiped a chair and asked me to sit down. She was rather a comely person of middle age, with fine black eyes and a sensible but rather a stern countenance. Taking up the Testament, as I sat down, I said I was glad that in this poor place she had the consolation of possessing the Word of God.

“ Yes, sir, I wish it MAY console me ; for I am, as you see, a houseless and desolate widow, turned from my home by my own husband’s brother ; and here I am with my three children at the mercy of the elements, and, what is worse than all, the eldest of them is deaf and dumb.”

This was indeed a piteous story ; and feeling for the poor, bereaved, and, as she stated, ill-treated creature, I gave her some assistance and inquired after her other children. She took down another copy of the New Testament and showed where her little fellow was reading in it.

“ So then, you send,” said I, “ your children to a scriptural school ; are you not afraid of the priest ?”

“ Why should I ?” said she, rather briskly. “ I have no call to the likes of him.”

“ Are you, then, a Protestant ?”

“ Yes, sir, and all my people.”

Having got over here all the time I could spare, I bade the woman and her children farewell, and felt, as I well might, not a little interested in her story. So, coming away from the place, I accosted a decent looking man who was making up a gap on the road side, and asked him about the woman.

“ Oh, sir,” said he, “ you are not to mind *all out* what she says. It’s her own passionate temper that has sent her to live up there ; her brother-in-law offered her share of the house, and they might, if it was not her own fault, have long ago settled these differences. One story’s good until another’s told.”

I certainly agreed with him as to the last observa-

tion, and, as there seemed to be a sincerity in the manner of the man, my compassion for the houseless widow was not a little abated.

But I have not done with the tufa hill. I was anxious to rise to the top to observe what was above it and beyond it. The reader is requested to observe that this formation lies and forms a mound or hill on the eastern range of the mountain that forms Ballyglen,—that this mountain is composed of blue, compact, carboniferous limestone, over which lie, towards the summit, strata of yellow sandstone—that two small streams run down the side of the tufa hill, and that the mountain I now speak of descends not in a regularly inclined plane to the river, but, as it were, in terraces. On getting to the summit of the tufa hill, I was shown a blessed well which runs near the western stream. In the deposits made by this well, or by the two streams, I could not find any recent marks of the tufous formation.\* I felt assured that, as these waters were not now in the habit of making any considerable deposits, so this immense mass never could be put together by their agency.

Taking into consideration the terraced form of the sides of the mountain, and the immense boulders that recline on the different levels, I am sure that the mouth of the glen towards the sea was closed at one period; and that at different periods, denoted by the different terraces, the waters wore their passage until

\* I call this fresh water deposit tufa, for want of a better name; were I a professed geologist, I might give a better. I call it tufa from its similarity in appearance to what is called tufa in Italy.

they arrived at their present state ; but still I am at a loss to account for this immense congeries of fresh water deposits, amongst which I found not only petrified leaves of trees and moss plants, but also animal bones.\*

\* Professor Agassiz, of Switzerland, has directed the attention of British geologists to the effects of glaciers, in the formation of terraces and striated rock surfaces and to the transport of masses of gravel and erratic boulders ; Messrs. Buckland and Lyell have written papers to show how similar phenomena in Scotland can only be adequately accounted for on the supposition of glaciers existing at some period in that country. It is impossible, says Doctor Buckland, to refer the transport of these mounds of gravel and these immense blocks of stone to the action of a current of water, as they are often placed precisely at the point where a stream descending from the high lands would have acted with the greatest velocity ; and he shows, that as the very same phenomena take place in the vicinity of the Alps by the operation of glaciers, so they must be accounted for by the same action in Scotland. Masses of gravel, called in Switzerland *moraines*, are thus formed on the sides of hills, which, had such *detritus* been brought by a rapid current, must have been propelled to the bottom of the glen or loch, and they remain where they were, because brought there by a glacier. Immense boulders, also, deriving their origin from a distant chain of mountains, have been carried across deep lakes and secondary mountain ranges, and deposited on the sides of opposite valleys, and this can only be accounted for on the glacier theory.

Now, if all this be true of Scotland, it surely applies to Ireland. I have seen enormous boulders of flesh-coloured granite, whose original site could only be Connemara, lying on the eastern shore of Lough Derg. They must have been brought to where they now rest over a range of Galway mountains and across the broad Shannon. Running water could *not* have done this. The phenomena I have noticed in Ballygle—its terraces, its enormous boulder perched on the side of the hill, its singular mass of calcareous matter, a fresh-water formation, that could not have originated in its present position—all may be referred to the existence and

Unaccountable as is the place to me, and interesting as it was from its picturesque and singular appearance, I wish some one who had more geological and physical knowledge would examine it and its position carefully : at all events I have had good reason to remember it ; for, desirous as I was to break off a good specimen of the filagree work, which some portions of it presented, and, striking it off with a blunt old hatchet, the tool slipped, and the knuckle of the middle finger of my right hand got a severe wound, which, though the skin has long since healed, now at the end of three months is extremely painful, hindering me from writing for any length of time, and will, I am sure, not add much to the beauty or legibility of my penmanship. A man said on seeing the cut I had given myself, that I ought to take care of it, for there was something poisonous in the stone. I have had reason to believe that he was not wrong, although the surgeon when I feed him said that I had only wounded a nerve. I wish that the poor widow had the fee, and I had been more careful of my knuckle !

With the kind assistance of Lieut. Sterne, my friends, Mr. Henri and Crampton, and I started from Ballycastle to proceed in his jaunting-car by land to Belderrig, and from thence to get along the coast by boat, in order to enable Mr. Henri to return to his station at Dunkeegan. Proceeding forwards, we met

operation of a glacier. The same may be said of the boulders which I have described as resting on the side of the cliff near Doonminalla promontory.—See, respecting the Scottish glaciers, Messrs. Buckland and Lyell's papers in the *Edinburgh Philosophical Journal* for January, 1841.



sundry groups of countrymen all well clad in the dark blue frieze commonly worn by the Mayo peasantry; they all as they passed us saluted us, and spoke some civil words either in English or in Irish. I confess I like this. In my early life I was always accustomed to find it so in Munster, and when I now occasionally pass the people, it grieves me to find that the practice of saluting the gentry is given over. Some say it is degrading and servile to bow to a stranger because he is well dressed: it may be so; and yet I do not think the world has gone on better since—at any rate, I have always been glad when a poor Irishman salutes me, for it not only calls on me to return it civilly and thankfully, but often begins a conversation which proves pleasant, if not profitable to both parties.

One group passed, driving a couple of cows, one had rags about its horn.

“What is that?” said I to the driver of the jaunting-car.

“Oh, it’s a charm against the ‘gentry’!” meaning the fairies.

Another group passed on, mountain ponies going before them, each having a pair of panniers on its back, in one of which was a pig, in another a stone to balance the grunter; the pigs looked comical with their snouts out. Pigs are well treated with us until they are stuck; they eat and sleep as well as their owners, and they, as we saw them here, ride on horseback; because, like pets, they are obstinate, and won’t lead or drive. See the advantage of a resolute temper.

Passing through a village called Ballyglass, I

observed in a corn field adjoining a congeries of grey stones. I was off the car in a moment.

"What's that?" says I, speaking to a labouring man and pointing to the rocks.

"Oh, that's a giant's grave."

"What giant?"

"Faix, myself don't know. One of the ould ones entirely; some big body belonging to Fin M'Coul, they say; but myself don't mind who it was."

In a minute the three of us were in the enclosure, and a curious one indeed it is; unlike any cromleach, Druidical circle, or giant's grave, I had ever before observed. Here were the massive and moss covered stones, not in a circle but an oval, as in the annexed cut; at either end of the oval were two square enclo-



tures or chambers, one connected by a narrow passage with the other; they had been originally covered like cromleachs, or rather like what in the Irish popular phrase are called Darby and Grana's beds. The covering stones were thrown off and were lying either broken or entire on either side; the entrance was on the south side of the oval, and opposite to the entrance was another enclosure or chamber that had

been also covered, but was single. There was nothing worthy of remark in the size of the stones forming the monument, or the extent of the ground it covered; but there was, certainly, in the arrangement of its parts.\* I had met nothing like it before,

\* The combinations I have noticed in the monument of Ballyglass, I find is not unusual in other countries, where the Celtic race had at one time dominion. The enclosures which appear in the annexed sketch at each end of the oval are to all appearance the same as what are called kistvaens in Wales; and it seems that in the West of France, and even in Persia and in Arabia, they are to be found.

I copy the following remarks from Mr. Kitto's *Pictorial History of Palestine*:—

“Concerning the Kistvaen, the diversity of opinion has been as great as concerning the cromleach. It consists of two or three or more sides or uprights, and a back stone occasionally, and over the whole is placed a top or covering stone. In general a cell is thus formed, closed on three sides, and covered at top, but open now in front. The name kistvaen is Welch, and means a stone chest. Kistvaens are commonly found in the middle of stone circles, near the cromleach, and sometimes without any cromleach near: they are also found isolated, like the cromleachs, though other Druidical monuments seem to be in the neighbourhood; they are sometimes arranged in circles, with or without a cromleach in the centre. But we are aware of no instance in which the reverse occurs,—namely, in which a kistvaen stands in a circle of cromleachs; but there are instances in which a circle is formed by kistvaens, with intervening upright stones. A remarkable example of this last description is exhibited in the Druidical circle in Jersey.

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How far the cromleachs and kistvaens contribute to the illustration of the altars of unhewn stone and the high places mentioned in Scripture is a point which we may perhaps take another opportunity to consider; meanwhile it may be noticed, that monuments of this and other classes still exist in Palestine, especially in the country beyond Jordan, although scarcely any of them have been described. Mr. Farran has probably given more information on the subject

and it struck me and my companions greatly. I have since met with another in the county of Donegal, exactly similar, but of much larger dimensions, and altogether a much more important work. But enough of this, until I return to the county of Donegal, from whence I first started as a sketcher, and to which when I return I may as well have done.

I am at a loss to account for the character of this monument—was it a temple or place of sepulture? About three hundred yards off to the south there is a monument, evidently the work of the same people; it is a small circle of stones not unlike one of those numerous ones at Carrowmore, in the county of Sligo. But I may say I am in the line of country where these remains are in abundance; all along the north-western coast they are found, and not far from the sea. I, a casual and hasty tourist, have met with many that have never been before noticed, as for instance, this one which is not even laid down in the ordnance sur-

than any other person. In his letter to Lord Lindsay he says,—‘On the eastern side of the hills of Jordan, and over the plains of Manasseh and Gad, monuments like those of the Druid age of England still illustrate the rural superstitions of the dim ages which, denounced in Holy Writ, were probably imparted to us from them.’ And Lord Lindsay himself, in one of his letters, remarks,—‘Mr. Farran tells me that there are some Phœnician monuments near Souf, one of which he showed me a drawing of, as decidedly Druidical as Stonehenge.’ Some of the monuments thus referred to are doubtless the same which attracted the attention of Captains Irby and Mangles, near the river Jordan. They state,—‘On the banks of the Jordan, at the foot of the mountains, we observed some very singular, interesting, and certainly very ancient tombs, composed of rough stones, resembling Kit’s Cotty House in Kent.’ Kit’s Cotty House is one of the largest cromleachs in the British Isles.”

vey. I am obliged to my learned and all-engrossing friend, Mr. Petrie, for allowing me to be the first to notice these remains in Erris, Tyrawly and Donegal. I am sorry to say that the people pay little respect to such ancient monuments—they feel no interest about them; and it is only their fears as supposing such grey stones to belong peculiarly to the “GENTRY,” that hinder them from obliterating them altogether; as for a Connaught landlord, it has not yet entered *his* head to care for these things. My companion, Mr. H., told me a story illustrative how much “the gentry,” as in the instance of this monument, are connected with such places—a story which he heard from one of his coast guard.

“A man between this and Belderrig had married—as why shouldn’t he—a good and pretty COLLEEN in his own village; and he provided for her a cabin to live in and a half acre of conacre of potatoes. There was a pig at the door when she walked in, a good dung-hill beside it for next year’s planting, and plenty of hens, to say nothing of a good cock. Paddy had more work than he could do betimes at the loom, and could turn off as clean a web as any boy in Tyrawly;—and what more did she want? and to be sure it was herself that was happy and easy! By-and-by there was the promise which seldom fails in the land of praties, and Katty was as large as need be. But so it happened, without any reason in life—just when she ought to be confined, she sickened off and died most unaccountably; and, sure enough, it was Paddy that was desolate after the dacent *berrin* he gave her; and sad he was as he sat by his hearth



with no one to sweep his floor or make or mend for him in the wide world. Thus he sat night after night roasting his potatoes in the ashes; for why should he put down a pot to boil them when he had none but himself to feed, for he had sold the pig to pay for Katty's wake and funeral. When one night he hears a noise at the door, and he just thought the voice was like Katty; and he was glad, and then afraid—"for sure," says he, "it must be her ghost, and what is it that makes the crathur uneasy now she is in the other world?"

"So he goes to the door, but for the life of him he dare not open it.

" 'Who is there?' says Pat, all of a tremble.

" 'It's I, your poor lost wife,' says Katty.

" 'Why, ain't you dead and buried, avourneen?' says Pat.

" 'No,' says she; 'but I'm all as one. I'm with the "*gentry*:" they took me to be wet-nurse to their king's daughter, and I am just brought to bed amongst them, and I am kept in that place of grey stones near Ballyglass; and I have not yet tasted any of their food, but steal away at night and pick up pratie skins, and whatever I can lay my hands on; and so I am recoverable. So, Paddy, if you come next night the moon is at the full to the place called the Giant's Grave, you will see a brindled cow with a calf at her foot. That's me, Paddy alanna. So bounce on it at once, in spite of whatever you hear or see—oh! bounce in like a brave boy, and drive out through the open place between the two large stones, which was wanst the ould doorway, the cow and calf,

—which is myself and my baby ; and if you do, Paddy, you will have back your own wife and your child to boot to stay with you in spite of the fairies. But, Paddy jewel, mind your courage.’

“ Paddy, you may be sure, promised to be ready and true ; and accordingly he went at the fixed time, and he did sure enough see the cow and calf grazing within the enclosure ; but when he attempted to enter, he was assailed with such horrible noises and threats,—he heard such unspeakable cursings and hootings, that his heart failed, and though every now and then he heard the cow moan, yet he lost his manhood—he had no more courage than a cat, so home he went, and lost his wife ; for never since, either by moonlight or starlight, was the brindled cow seen within the circle of grey stones.

“ This story is believed by many between Ballycastle and Belderrig, if it’s not credible in other places it cannot be helped : at all events—there are many such pranks recorded of the gentry ; and as it is not at all doubted that they like to have their offspring nursed by woman’s milk, there cannot be any *reasonable* grounds for denying that they carried off Kitty Barrett.”

My friend having finished his report of the connection between the old Druidical monument and the fairies, I observed that I had somewhere read that in Brittany the popular opinion was, that the fairies were the wives of the Druids. I also having remarked how general the belief was, that it was possible to rescue a person from the power of the “ gentry,” in case they had not tasted fairy food ; he mentioned

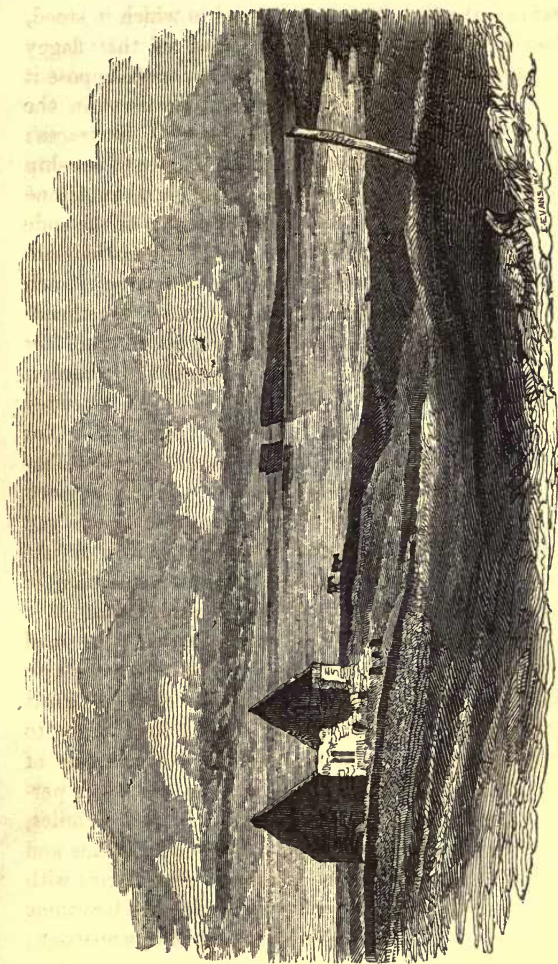
that about ten years ago, a poor woman at Portnacloy, whose son was slaughtered on a Sunday in a broil, a few minutes after mass was over, and within one hundred yards of the chapel door; she, considering that her fine boy was not dead, but carried away by the "gentry," and hoping that he was not imprudent enough to eat of their food, in order to support him in his good resolution, actually left cold boiled potatoes out for several nights, in hopes he would use them, so that not having ate in their company, he might seize some happy opportunity of escaping from their custody.

At the distance of a quarter of a mile from the road we were going, and not far from the sea shore, lies the old ruined church of Dunfeeny. Observing a lofty pillar-stone near it, we were induced to descend from our jaunting-car to examine: it might have inscriptions on it—it was worth half an hour's expenditure in the scrutiny. By the way, what a useful vehicle a jaunting-car is,—just the thing for a geologist, botanist, or curiosity hunter. You can hop off and on—you can stow away your stones, plants, or specimens. Give me such a mode of conveyance, and a prating, gossiping, credulous, and good-humoured Paddy for a driver, and I grudge not the whole world of lofty tourists, with their bang-up coaches and bang-up coachmen, with their cigars and slang sauciness.

We walked down to Dunfeeny, but what we saw did not over well repay our hot walk. The pillar-stone, though curious for its great slenderness in comparison of its height, which was about twenty-five

feet over the level of the grave-yard in which it stood, bore now no inscription; for being of that flaggy limestone which is liable to exfoliate, even suppose it originally was sculptured, the weather must in the course of a short time have obliterated all traces: the only thing remarkable in this old place of worship and interment was, that the unpolished sandstone flags that covered the mouldering remains of the rude forefathers of the adjoining hamlet, bore on their unchiselled surfaces the marks of the wave ripple, such as you see marked off on a sandy strand. One headstone consisted of a broken quern, a handmill for grinding corn, of the most ancient and simplest construction. One good result, however, attended our visit to the ruined church of Dunfeeny. For while some of us were engaged in examining the pillar-stone, Mr. Henri occupied himself in taking a sketch of the line of coast, and of Downpatrick Head, and Dunbrista Isle. The short time allowed him to take this bird's-eye view may be urged in extenuation of any demerits he is guilty of as a draughtsman.

Proceeding about two miles further, the road enters into the mountain district, and you get nearer the sea, which here beats against cliffs of great altitude, for, in fact, the mountains here begin to meet the ocean; and here commences the line of precipices which exhibit the hills as cut down perpendicularly, and a lofty coast for twenty miles, dishevelled and torn away in the most sublime and fantastic manner. This disruption first begins with the secondary formations of carboniferous limestone and sandstone,—such as are exposed at Downpatrick;



Downpatrick Head and Dunbrista.





and the precipices, at the point I am now describing, (where the new road formed by government from Ballycastle to Belmullet comes within a few yards of the cliff,) are much higher and much grander than those of Moher, in the county of Clare ; and as at Moher, the stratifications of the rock being nearly horizontal, the line of lofty coast in its prominences and indentures looks like a wavy line of ribband jasper, black, blue, white, and yellow, rising perpendicularly for three hundred feet above the clear and now placid sea, which heaved like a translucent beryll, and now changed to snowy surf, as it shattered lazily upon the rocks.

There was a quiet solemn stillness all around ; the heave below of the ocean so placid that it did not interrupt the repose, neither did the occasional hoarse chatter of the royston crow, or the bleat of the lambs on the mountain side, or the whirl or the challenge of the lapwing, as it passed angrily over head, and scolded at any approach to where her young ones nestled. Away eastward was Downpatrick Head, enclosing as with a sweeping horn a wide bay, and that horn tipped, as I may say, with its curious and mystic isle of Dunbrista ; and far to the north, looming in the indistinctness caused by the easterly wind, which scarcely blew so as to ripple the wave, could just be seen Teeling Head, and the lofty group of Slieve Leam, in South Donegal.

Very grand and very beautiful was the look out on that wild shore and complacent ocean, with a solitary sail creeping away in the offing ; and down I sat on a bank, and took out my telescope, leaving my com-

panions to get on and rise the opposite hill that lay on our onward road ; my spyglass was pulled out to its full length, and it was a long metallic tube, and I had it levelled to catch an object seaward that I wished to be acquainted with, when I heard, as over my head, the sound of a harsh and angry voice, and speaking in a language I did not understand. On looking up, I perceived two women standing beside me, in the red petticoat and brown gown of the country. One, old and ugly, stood rating me at the top of her voice, and using gesticulations that were evidently menacing adjuncts to the displeasure of her countenance ; the other, a younger person, seemed to partake of the same temper, but she only used an occasional interjection, and, pointing to the mountain that stretched away to the south, and then to my telescope, seemed as it were to connect the two together in a concatenation that to all appearance was not satisfactory. Perfectly unconscious of any sinister intent, and desirous to please the *fair* sex, I closed up my telescope, put it into my pocket, and began to give the ladies some English in exchange for their vernacular ; and as I had not time, even if I knew how, to use any roundabout in the way of pacifying, I took a sixpence out of my pocket, and proffered it to the old objurgatory dame. O potent bit of silver ! what a change came over the wrinkles of the beldame's mouth ! the very crow's-feet about her eyes played away in new directions,—the arm that was extended in menace was now smoothing her petticoat, as she knelt down to bless me, and the other woman joined in what appeared to me

great thanks that I had repaid their anger with kindness.

I departed with great good humour on both sides ; they calling on Wurria—that is, Holy Mary—to bless me, for I could so far understand their Irish ; and I smiling and kissing hands to them in my meekest mood. When I rejoined my companions, and told the circumstance to our driver, he laughed heartily, and said that the ladies had mistaken my telescope for a gun ; that they were, he believed, the wife and daughter of the man whose business it was to protect the game on the mountain from poachers, and no doubt they considered me, when levelling my telescope, as being intent on some death-dealing deed of poaching. My sixpence, of course, convinced them, as money has often satisfied in like manner, those in authority, that I was or ought to be a very harmless person.

## CHAPTER XI.

A Boating voyage along the coast of Erris, an auspicious day, good appointments and good company—Belderrig—Benmore—Mountains cut down, height of Cliffs—Headlands and bays—Different rock formations—Wild goats—Rowing up to a mountain—Pass unexpectedly through a fissure—Moista Sound, description—An explanation—A trap-dyke—Porturlin—Increasing magnificence of Cliff scenery—The undertaking of a fisherman—The natural Arch—Another trap-dyke—Scenery—Sea Birds—Uses of trap-dykes—Interesting natural phenomenon—Loss of a Coast-guard galley—Only one saved—His great exertions—C. O.'s Sound—Portnacloy—Cave of Doonminalla, or rather Henri's cave—Different appearance now from what it presented on my former visit—The retreat of a Loyalist in 1798, his Roman Catholic friend—Ascent of a Cliff—A cave of another character—Get to the top—Grand view—Eagles and their destructiveness—Anecdotes of them—A brave mother—Courage of eagles and intelligence—How Manus M'Grath caught two old ones—An eagle every day supplies an Erris Squire with his breakfast—The reasoning powers of an eagle exercised.

WE soon arrived at Belderrig, where we were to take boat; for going in company with Lieut. Henri, who was returning to his own station, we were allowed by the commanding officer of the station to make use of the boat, and proceed westward with our friend.

There is nothing at all interesting at this place, which is but a rude, and I should suppose in rough weather a dangerous landing-place even for boats, up whose high rocky beach they must be dragged, to protect them from the surf which rolls in fearfully at times on this wild coast. But nothing could be calmer than the water now; nothing better appointed than our boat; nothing more satisfactory than the ease, regularity, and, at the same time, velocity with which



the snow white cutter swept out of the cove, and turned the point, as our course lay westward. I hold myself to have been this day peculiarly fortunate,—so much so, as repaying in full all former disappointments, and justifying me for my perseverance, in a third time attempting to see the sea cliffs of Erris. Give me a row-boat, such a one as I then enjoyed—such companions—such oarsmen—such a cutter—such a day—such a means to move without fatigue, and without the inconvenience of over-heat or cold, along such a coast as this, and I cannot imagine any human enjoyment superior. I have travelled through many lands, and if I have a pleasure in life it is in travelling, not in the modern Anglo-Yankee acceptance of the word certainly, along and away under the vile dominion of a steam power, so despotic that you must submit—so cruel, that you cannot stop it, however it may stop you. But I am sure that not even on the Rhine, from Coblentz to Mayence, did I enjoy such a day as this.

How shall I describe this magnificent coast, you first get on between Horse Island and the mainland. This island is comparatively tame, and there is nothing calculated to strike your mind on it, or on the mainland. And here is one interesting circumstance connected with the coasting from east to west along this shore—that every thing strikes you more and more as increasing in magnificence. The cliffs now begin to rise as you approach Benmore; this is the north-eastern terminus of a range of mountains of prettily rounded forms, as you view them from the interior; and here the face of the northernmost

mountain has gone down into the deep, and a precipice is presented of five hundred feet ; you row under this—it is not absolutely perpendicular,—there are ledges and slopes on it, clothed with vivid verdure, contrasting delightfully with the grey mural precipices above and below. These natural walls are here and there riven and streaked with water-worn fissures, down which cascades danced and sparkled like the gleamings of silver lace in the sun ; here and there, on these green ledges were white specks, that sometimes moved and changed positions ; some bounded with the rapidity of birds from one level to another. The boatmen said they were goats, wild and ownerless, that had found refuge there time out of mind, who kept possession of these inaccessible cliffs, and bounded from range to range as secure as the fox, the badger, or the eagle. Our telescopes allowed us to fix upon one or two bearded patriarchs ; one stood out on the “hoary brow” of a rock all tinted, and fringed with ferns, lichens, and sedums ; and as he stamped with his foot, he might, we thought, be fired at successfully, and he challenged it, one would think, by his solemn insolence ; but, thank goodness, we had not the temptation of doing the creature an injury, for we had no fire-arms, and if we had taken him down, who would have been advantaged by the carcase of a he-goat.

It was evident that the previous weather had, from its constant rains, given a great increase to the vegetations on these cliffs, and the now hot sun and placid breezes had given luxuriance to every thing that could grow. I never saw any thing equal to the

painted variety of these precipices, and to the numerous birds of land and sea that were exercising their wings and throats all around us. It was the season of incubation: what multitudes, what beauty and variety of feather and form! And every now and then we would hear the splash of a seal, as he trundled his bulk from a rock. We were rowing now along the cord of an arc, the half circuit of which was composed of those painted precipices—here a point laughing in full sunshine—there a gorge cast into mysterious shade; and riven away from the uppermost eminence, as struck by the trident of Neptune, and brought down in varied wreck; below were immense masses of rock, around which the waves moaned, gurgled, and spouted—some assuming the forms of churches, others of towers, of chimneys, of pyramids, of elephants, men on horseback, and lawyers with their wigs; and we now came along the line of our semicircle, from Benmore to Benwee, until we seemed directing the bow of our boat directly against the face of a cliff so very perpendicular, that not a sign of any green thing could be seen, to tell that there was one spot where vegetation could catch at: and still the boatmen determinately bent to their oars, and the steersman held on his course against this mountain-face, which rose 600 feet. It might, and indeed it did remind me of Sinbad's incontrollable course, when nearing the magnetic and talismanic mountain.

But soon the mystery of our course was solved; for Lieutenant Henri, who held the helm, by a slight change of his hand turned the boat's head to star-

board, and all at once I saw, forward, a cleft in the mountain-barrier, like a gigantic saw-cut, apparently so narrow, and yet so straight, so cleanly cut, and so distinct in the downright sunlight of noonday, that when comparing this fissure with the gigantic objects all around, it appeared as if a broad-shouldered man could not pass through it, not to say a boat with oars; but we did, however, unhesitatingly, but with reefed oars, proceed slowly and gracefully to pass through—and indeed it was a sublime sight.

“Take off your hat, sir, and look up; observe what a clean cut it is; mind how the walls on either side are conformable—how the stratifications fit—how the ochres and the lichens dispose their harmonious tints all the way up—how here a mass of milkwhite quartz, there a facet of shining mica sparkles in the sun—below a cormorant skims his dull, heavy flight through the chasm, and leads our way, not very ominously—above, again, a flock of blue pigeons has, on rapid wing, gone through also, glad as it were of such a short cut through the mountain. I am obliged to that eagle that has just opened out his pinions on the brow of *Islan Maistre*, and one of his feathers falls as he soars away, and comes down in leisurely circles, and will, I hope, reach the boat as it creeps onwards through the sound.—Rest on your oars a little, boys; why so fast? the day is long. I can never expect to see this again—give me the means of such enjoyment a little longer.”

But it is easier to feel, to wonder, and enjoy than to describe. So, for want of power, I can only do the best I can, and give you, reader, what I consider



Moista Sound.





a very accurate drawing of Moista Sound, executed on the spot by my friend Archdeacon Verschoyle, who has so philosophically and so faithfully described the geological formations of this coast, in his valuable Memoir on the Northern Coast of Mayo and Sligo.

I would take this cut, as far as my eye could judge, to be about two hundred yards. Mr. Henri, in nautical phrase, asserted it to be somewhat more than a cable-length. Well, we are now through, and you look backwards and see the sunbeams shedding their lucid glory on the green sea, eastward of the chasm—a sea, to all appearance, surrounded on all sides with stupendous precipices. And here you have the grandeur of Alps and ocean combined, and, looking on straight forward through the cut, you see on the opposite precipice, in a direct line eastward, a black line running down from the top to the bottom of the mountain, until it sinks into the sea; and this black ribband is apparently of the same width as the cut you have passed through—What is it? It is a trap-dyke, whose dark, igneous, basaltic mass is altogether distinct from the rock, on either side—a great perpendicular vein, dividing the strata of the mountain.

“Now,” says Mr. Henri, “don’t you see the cause of the fissure you have just passed through? It was once filled up with a trap vein—with a portion of that very dyke that you see inserted directly opposite you, and which has heretofore incontestably filled up this gap.”

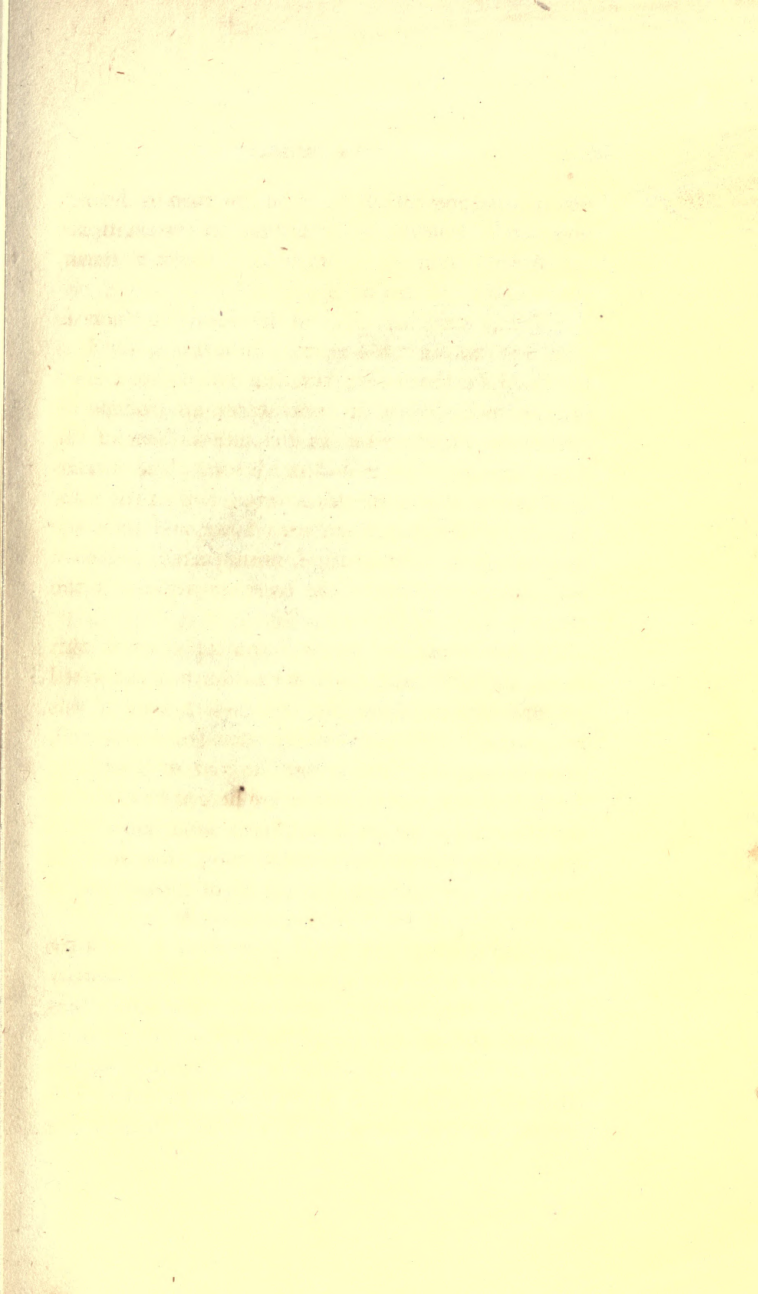
But here I took leave to observe that the stone forming a trap-dyke was generally of the hardest

texture, and most likely to resist the force of the sea, and that I had, in many places, seen such dykes running out from shore, braving the shock of ocean, while all around was worn away.

"True," said Mr. H., "I do allow that there is great hardness in these igneous formations, but it is not the dyke that wears first, but the adjacent sides of the rock, which in most cases are chemically altered and disintegrated by the intense heat of the fused trap as it bursts up from below. The mechanical power of the sea then works, not on the trap, but on its sides, which are worn away, and then the dyke is left to stand by itself, unsupported, and soon goes down, yielding to the ceaseless attacks of the ocean."

"I have examined many of the sea caves on this coast, and find that their formation was connected with the causes I have just stated—but more of this by-and-by." We now, having rounded a headland, entered into the little refuge harbour of Porturlin. I was glad that our boatmen were here to be changed, not that they were not able, expert, kind and civil—but the day was intensely warm, and I thought eight miles was quite enough for one set of men to pull a boat.

I have not much to say of Porturlin; it is but the mouth of a glen that passes through the mountain-barrier of this extraordinary coast. The force of the sea has thrown up a rapidly-shelving beach, some forty or fifty feet high, paved with huge rolled stones. Behind this immense glacis is a little lake, from which the fresh water trickles down, through the





Innismuck.



rolled stones, to the sea. It is supposed a canal might be cut through the beach into the lake, where boats might find shelter. I should imagine that such a cut would be filled up by the force of one storm from the north-west.

Having got another boat and crew, now under the command of Lieutenant Henri, we started for Portnacloy, and again we were called on for continued admiration. The mountains rose higher and higher, and consecutively these mountains were also broken down, as they appear to be all along this coast—the precipices became higher, and the ruins of the great breakage more various and magnificent; and still we kept under the cliffs, and safely on the placid sea kept our way, hugging the shore. And now a long and lofty headland stood out northward, and beyond it stretched a long island, high and rocky, through the centre of which an arch is worn, looking through which you can see afar off the sun-lit ocean; rising out of its bosom the as yet distant Stags of Broadhaven. Were we to go through this arch that had been perforated through the island, which bears the euphonic name of Pig, or in Irish, Innismuck, or were we to pass between the headland and the island?

While I was thus uncertain of our course, one of the boatmen showed us where a man, who with his corragh was on this side of the headland, and hearing that his neighbours were taking plenty of fish on the other side, and aware that he dare not, in the rough sea, attempt to work round, actually fixed his boat on his back, and carried it over at a place so perpendicular, that it would appear scarcely possible

for him to carry himself. While talking of the resolute energy of the man, our steersman had rounded a point of cliff unobserved by me, and all at once another magnificent passage presented itself, which I had the *honour* of passing through. This is similar in height and breadth to Moista Sound, but much more interesting. For some forty or fifty feet above the level of the water, the passage is closed up at top, and underneath is a natural arch. You get under this without any difficulty, in the present placid state of the sea, and you see at once that you owe to a perforated trap-dyke the opening that is formed for you. And now you are under this arch—look up—your boat has somewhat more room here than at Moista. Observe the black mass of basalt overhead—it goes up from thence 500 feet. What is to hinder this vein, twelve feet thick, from coming down and crushing you? I am sure I cannot tell. It has no key-stone, no wedge-like masses of rock. Is my friend Henri right, and is the trap safe and sure above, beyond the action of the sea, that has no power of working away at the disintegrated rock on either side? Be this as it may, here is a stupendous bridge, some 600 feet high, and as noble an arch as any in the world, by means of which you pass right through, a lofty and long headland from one bay into another.

The poor fisherman who carried his boat on his back over the six hundred feet of headland, dare not venture through in a stiff gale; it is well *we* had our opportunity—what a contrast this gloomy arch presents to all that is bright and sunny in the land-locked bays on either side. The basalt is black over-

head ; the sides have no tints save those of sombre ochre ; and there is, while your boat is kept stationary, a drop, heavy and fast coming down on either side of you. I am not sure whether the clamour here of the sea birds that were soaring and circling all around, their multifarious and multitudinous voices, their black, white, blue and grey colours, two or three eagles as it were reposing on their broad wings high over all, and sending out occasionally their lordly voices, which I cannot describe better than likening them to an angry man's laugh,—I say, I am not sure whether all this animal din might not be too much for delicate ears ; but in such a place, amidst all the natural grandeur, with every thing in keeping—so savage—it was to me a glorious accompaniment, befitting a scene where man was but a rare intruder on the nesting-place of the oceanic birds, and the home of the eagle.

Mr. Henri, with a well-exercised sea-officer-voice overcoming the universal clamour, observed, that from what he has seen here, he has, with admiration at the provisions of an all-wise Providence, come to the conclusion that trap-dykes are the feeders of springs, by conducting the waters that fall on the mountains to the interior of the earth. “*The probability* that such is the case may have struck many when walking *about* a dyke, but the absolute fact I strongly suspect few have had an opportunity of observing besides myself. The circumstance I allude to is this : after a very rainy night, I once sought shelter under this archway from a heavy rain squall, but on approaching it obliquely, I was much dis-

appointed at finding that to all appearance it offered quite the reverse of what I sought, as the water was falling from its roof in streams. By placing my boat, however, directly under the dyke, I was enabled to keep all hands perfectly dry, between two sheets of water that fell from the sides of it, and formed queer and uncomfortable looking curtains on either side of us. My situation, I believe you will readily admit, was a novel one."

Leaving the arch, which is certainly the greatest coast curiosity I have yet seen, we rowed out into an open sunlit bay, surrounded on all sides except the north by precipices six and seven hundred feet high, and the bay itself studded with ledges, reefs, and pointed crests of rocks, that rose on all sides from the now calm translucent sea; all so quiet—I will not call it a *grim* repose, for all was as beautiful as grand; it was no doubt the REST of the passionate—such a rest that you felt it was a pity that any thing so peaceful should again lash itself into foam. But you saw indeed marks of past fury all around; not alone the riot of the ocean, but the remains of upturn and cast-down mountains—the contortions of stratifications above—the *débris* of cast-down hills below. And now in our little fragile boat we were winning our pleasant way, not amidst ruins of the works of men's hands, but the ruins of nature—ruins evincing that forces were employed even grander and mightier than the magnificent foundations they were commissioned to overthrow. And on we glided; and what if a squall should come on—what if, before we got into the haven where we would be, the wind should call on

the sea to awake and get up—to arise and dance, and toss, and hiss, and roar amidst these rocks? It is no mere *possibility*, such an event occurring. Alas! such often takes place: and in one of those sudden squalls, a coast-guard galley's crew not long ago was surprised; about this very spot the boat was upset, and the crew all but one perished; amongst whom was a worthy and valuable officer, Lieutenant Ricketts, the inspecting officer of these stations; a chief officer and four boatmen shared his fate. The one got on yonder reef; he rested himself there for a few moments, and then watching a lull of the sea, got ashore at the foot of yonder precipice.

“Look,” said Mr. H.; “see how it rises like a wall; you would think no goat, no fox, no wild cat, could ascend, nothing that had not a wing; yet the fine powerful fellow, struggling for life, escaping from the surging sea below, *did* get up, and arrived in safety at Portnacloy, to announce the calamity that had befallen his comrades.”

Proceeding onwards along this ever varying coast we now reached a headland, extremely interesting for the contortions of its exposed stratifications, for the caves that perforate it: the black basalt of the trap-dyke here is clothed fold over fold with encircling and overlapping vestments of mica slate; no knotted and fine veined piece of mahogany could present so many twistings and configurations as this point of At-tatovick.\* A little further, we came to another sound,

\* “There is a point half way between Porturlin and Portnacloy remarkable for its contorted strata; it is misnamed in the Ordnance survey. It has always been called by the



where an island is separated from the mainland by a fissure almost as straight in its cut, and as clean and lofty as that of Moista; this place is so much encumbered with rocks, and presents such a formidable Scylla and Charybdis aspect, that in the memory of Mr. Henri, now seventeen years on this coast, no boat had ever attempted to make the passage. The day was singularly calm and clear, not a ripple on the water, which was so transparent that every rock, every plant that fathoms deep clothed with its graceful festoonings, the unequal bottom, all were visible; the very Medusæ and animal flowers seemed to expand their purple petals and delicate tentaculæ, as if they were rather suspended in air than in ocean. I therefore had the hardihood to propose that we should attempt the passage of the sound, and Mr. H. consented, and with caution and expertness the passage *was* made; and we had an opportunity of seeing, what, if by itself, and only to be observed on any other shore, would have caused astonishment and admiration; as it is, it is very little inferior to Moista Sound. I like to think that, when this coast becomes, as it so well deserves, the resort of tourists,

natives Fohercloiheen, (I cannot ascertain the meaning of the word,) the large rock between which and it we passed in the boat, is called Spink; the former (Fohercloiheen) is called in the Ordnance map, and Archdeacon Verschoyle has also fallen into the mistake, Attatovick Point. There is a cliff just on the eastern side of the eastern point of Portnacloy called Altatovick, and I suspect that the mistake arose from the Ordnance surveyor standing on it when he asked the name of Fohercloiheen, and that his informant mistook the inquirer's meaning."—*Extract from Mr. Henri's Letter.*

when there are roads and hotels, guides and guide books, this sound will be denominated as C. O.'s Pass.

We now entered the deep little bight of Portnacloy ; a good place of shelter for boats, and which is, in fact, the mouth of a glen that cuts the mountains here at right angles to the sea, and sends down the drainage of a few narrow valleys to the ocean. Here we changed our boat and crew again, and set out for the promontory and cave of Doonminalla.

The reader of this little volume must be aware that I had visited this cave on a former occasion, and under circumstances very different indeed from the present ; it was then in the very worst period of the most inclement autumn that has been remembered in Ireland ; and by the fortuitous circumstance of the wind blowing off the land, I was enabled, even in stormy weather, to get an entrance into this cave, whose accessibility had been denied to many that have sought it, and that for months together. I was now privileged to visit it again, under the most favourable circumstances, and I am glad that I was able to see the whole scene under such different aspects. Now the entrance was effected without any difficulty, in the midst of calm and sunshine, and we had an opportunity of admiring in this great cavity, the magnificent contrast of light and shade and the soft harmonious sigh of the sea, as it breathed out its gentleness along the distant recesses of this hall of Neptune : there was *now* nothing within that was alarming or repulsive. On a former occasion, the cormorant, driven in from the foaming

sea, despairing of its supper, was flapping its dark wing, and uttering its uncouth shriek as our boat scared it from where it stood brooding. Now the nasty bird was far away, fishing : no sound was heard to break upon the ocean murmur, but the cooing of the pigeon, as it courted its mate on the ledges of the lofty dome. And then, what a look out ! If ever any one wishes to look forth upon a glorious prospect, let him betake himself to a cave, stand back far from its entrance, and then observe. I wish I had some Turner with me now, not a mere draughtsman—black lead won't do, I must have a colourist,—I must have one who can catch tints, and make the varying bloom and blushes of nature his own. What a glorious picture he might here create. The interior cavern with all its ledges, recesses, and buttresses, relieved or shaded, its swelling dome decorated with the wild fretwork and fantastic tracery of nature, coloured with ochres, lichens, and marine parasites, and these moreover whitened and yellowed, and made to look similar in colour and form by the absence of light ; here sparkles of crystal, there white masses of quartz rock ; even the very exuviæ of the sea birds as they stained the strata, adding to the variety, and making a portion of the harmonious keeping of this great visible obscure ; and then to look out from under the distant dark arch, it cutting on the serene azure of the sunny sky, the streak of the evening sun, a line of molten silver on the green ocean, the magnificent Stags of Broadhaven, seven in number, seen just at hand, the cavern acting as a sort of picture tube to bring them near and add to their distinctness. See, how they rise like

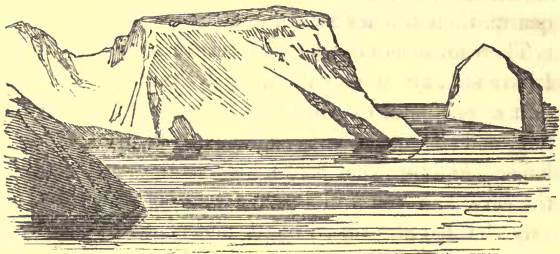
cones from the water ; the tops of marine mountains similar to the reeks of M'Gillicuddy at Killarney, or the pins of Benabola in Connemara, all so like and yet so different, all exposing their manifold and contrasted stratifications as they rise in different inclination from the sea level, here a white line of milk quartz, there a black streak of shale or basalt.

There are no sea rocks I have ever seen, and I believe I have seen all around England, Ireland, and a great part of Scotland, to equal in beauty of form, elevation, and singularity of grouping, the Stags of Broadhaven. And turn your boat a little to the right side of the cave, and you will catch a view of Kid Island, very elevated and varied in its outline, and you may, on this rarely frequented and dangerous sea, observe the sun just sparkling on the rigging of a vessel so far off that its hull is down, and she knows she has no business, no not in serene weather, near this iron bound coast. But enough of the Cave of Doonminalla. I have seen it in weather rough and smooth, and comparing it with every other sea-worn cavern, it is decidedly the grandest, because in height, breadth, and capacity, it is more like the dome of a great temple.\*

Leaving the cave, we had time to look about the exterior of this great headland, which, as its name, Doonminalla denotes, is a natural fortress that might be made even more impregnable than Gibraltar, and

\* The annexed wood-cut of Doonminalla promontory is taken from a rough pencil sketch, made while approaching it. All practical sketchers must be aware of the difficulty of drawing any thing well while in a row-boat in rapid motion.

no doubt it was used as a retreat in old times,—a refuge and a rallying point for the Vikingyr, or Sea Kings. In the year 1798, a Protestant gentleman, holding property in Erris, and fearing that he was obnoxious to the people, retreated to this promontory



which is accessible only at a single spot, and by a single person at a time ; and he not to say climbed, but scaled, what from below, appears a perpendicular precipice. Up here he lifted his family ; up here he hoisted some furniture and utensils ; he made himself a sort of boolie or sheeling, under the shelter of a rock, and here he remained for upwards of six weeks, (it was well for him that the weather of that year was so invariably fine,) a poor Roman Catholic schoolmaster, who was his fosterer, coming occasionally to him with provisions and news, and watching over his safety with all the devotedness that has so often marked that connection, almost peculiar to Ireland, not of blood, but of the human bosom.

This headland, besides being excavated by the large opening which I have just now attempted to describe, has more caverns, all which, it is probable, may in



process of time be united. There is one called "The Kitchen," at the back of the "Grand Parlour," with which it is said there is already a communication. Having doubled this headland, being desirous to ascend Benwee, the highest precipice that overhangs the ocean here, and after having taken our views from the sea-level, now see what a thousand feet higher would do for us. We pushed into a cove surrounded on all sides but one by precipices, and, dismissing our boat's crew to return to Portnacloy, undertook to ascend the cliffs,—and a pretty ascent it was, on a day the most broiling of any that had shone on Ireland for two years.

Reader, I wish you a good pair of lungs, as well as legs, when you would climb an almost perpendicular cliff of five hundred feet elevation. I wish you also a good draught of sherry and water, when you get half-way up, and a still larger swig when you get to the top; for, rest assured, that not a small quantity of your animal liquids will bid you a farewell, in your exercise of hands, feet, and lungs, as you struggle upwards. But who would not waste a little of their animal moisture for the sake of seeing the whole north-western coast of Ireland; and this is the very point—the left shoulder-knot, if I may so say, of the island, and you can see the long range of coast southward, as well as what trends eastward and by north.

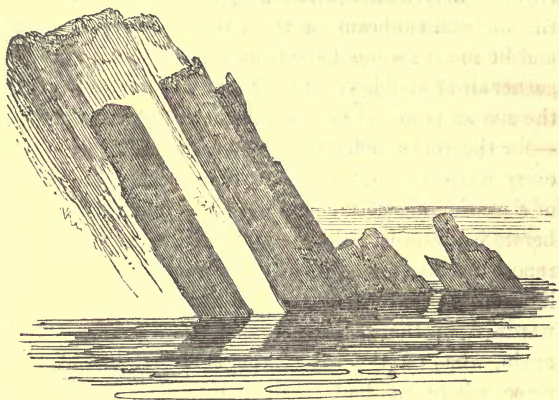
Well, we are landed on the rough beach, where huge granite, greenstone, and quartz rocks have undergone the rubbing process for thousands of years, and are almost as smooth and as round as marbles. Then here, as you approach the natural wall that rises

in our face for two or three hundred feet, you see it sparkling with crystals, presenting their multitudinous facets to the sun, and you are disposed to linger here to strike off specimens, and bring home for the ladies some of the curiosities of Benwee. But whether successful or not, it is not my task to tell. So, up we go clambering; and the mouth of a cave opened about eighty feet from the sea beach, and we entered and found it curious, not for any beauty, or for size,—for it does not enter far in,—but it runs like a perpendicular pipe upwards, some fifty or sixty feet, and the walls of it are all white, or rather cream coloured, and it is full of a fine sand, the deposit of the decomposed quartz rock. In fact, this is only the vein of a soft portion of the surrounding silicious formation, and the percolation of water has loosened it and carried portions of it away, and so formed this cave—in dry and warm weather a quiet and cool place to rest in, and look out on the magnificent and melancholy sea, and hear no sound but its solemn moan, except the passionate challenge of the eagle, as he stands on his rock-perch, and, as it were, demands why his dominion is disturbed. I said it was no small exertion to get up the tortuous track that leads to the top;—I wish Mrs. H——, or Lady C——, or any other petticoat tourist, were here to try it, I think the eagles would clap their wings, laugh out lustily, and cry, “Well done, blue-stockings!” if, while cased in stays and bustle, and all the feminine armour trusted in to catch and captivate mankind, they should also conquer this tough difficulty.

But we are at the top, having stripped coat and waistcoat to grapple with it—and no water to be had

—and it is the hottest sun that shone on Ireland for two years! The ragged sheep are lying panting under the boggy banks of the mountain; the cliff-crow has his red bill open as he perches, oppressed with this unusual sunbeam, on the ledges of the precipice, and he has his wings loose from his body, as it were to gather air around his beating heart. I scarcely ever felt the sun so powerful, or its intensity of light so great,—for the rocks reflected it, the sea reflected it from every wavelet below, that answered to the gentle ruffle of a passing air-stream, and became a mirror to reverberate it upwards. All around, indeed, was in splendid repose. I had thought, when rowing along this sublime coast, that nothing could exceed the view upwards from the sea level; and now I considered again, when on the top of the cliff, and just at the place where we had reached the high land, that the sight was finer; for here, in the centre of a crescent, of which Doonminalla formed the right horn and Benwee Head the left—was the whole semicircle between the two headlands composed of the most shattered, broken-down, ruined cliffs that can possibly be imagined; just as if the mountain had been blown up with gunpowder, and masses of huge ruins of rock lay tumbling all around. Here crack behind crack, going back into the mountain, and presenting long parallel chasms, similar to what I had seen on Slieve Crohan, in Achill. Here a piece of the mountain had slipped down along the inclined plane of a smooth stratum, and what once formed an upper peak, was now some hundred feet half-way down, presenting most picturesquely its broken continuity. It is, indeed, a

slip of singular interest and grandeur. I despair of giving an idea of its appearance even with a drawing, which was hastily sketched on the moment. Below, the



green, pellucid, beryl sea, with its everlasting sigh, which comes up here in solemn cadence, a sea which is never seen to such advantage as from a great height, and especially as when here, many fathoms deep, its varied bottom can be observed, covered with its luxuriant vegetations.

But now we must ascend Benwee, the highest point of this cut-down mountain-range of North Mayo—and we did so. A glorious eminence it is, indeed. The face of the precipice, as you looked downwards, seemed perpendicular, except that here and there was a dark streak, denoting a ledge, on which we could see young eaglets on their nests, and old birds either soaring or perching near at hand. I

never saw so many of these birds at a time, except at Horn Head, in Donegal. Mr. H. said, that though eagles were, no doubt, a good accompaniment to a scene of such grandeur as that we were now looking out on, yet they were extremely mischievous ; not content with their exploits at sea, and along the bays and rivers, where they pounce on the mackerell or the salmon, they hunt the hares on the mountain-side, destroy the grouse, carry off the lambs, sometimes kill, and in collected numbers devour the sheep. In fact they have rendered Erris, which to all appearance should be one of the finest districts for game in the British islands, one of the worst for the sportsman that can be imagined.

One of the men in our company, while we were looking down on them, and making eagles the subject of our chat, observed, that they sometimes attacked christhens, and he told of a woman near Mount Nephin, who not long ago went to dig potatoes in an adjoining field, and carried along with her the babe she was nursing ; and preparatory to her work, she laid her child down on the sunny side of the ditch and there left it, as she thought, quite safe. But while engaged in her task, an eagle pounced down on the little one ; but luckily, instead of plunging its talons into its head, they struck through, and were entangled in its flannel frock ; and thus fastened, though the bird had not power of wing to soar at once aloft, it would every now and then rise from the ground, and passing on a little would touch the earth again, and so the child was half carried, half dragged along. In this perilous predicament, the mother rushed across the po-



tato ridges, and spade in hand (for what will not a mother do?) boldly attacked the spoiler, and not only succeeded in recovering her infant, but in killing the bird. This scene would be a fine subject for a picture. I should think there is an artist in Ireland that could with great fidelity of grouping, and force of colouring, depict the young Connaught woman handsome, and yet fierce, in the severity of her maternal feelings, battling with the ravisher of her little one.

This fact of the Tyrawly woman gave rise to a conversation on eagles, and Mr. Henri remarked, "a few days ago I saw a hare shot, and the gun was scarcely discharged, when an eagle suddenly appeared and seemed very much disposed to dispute the prize. Indeed, the boldness," said he, "of these birds at times, when compared with their general wariness, is surprising, and I am almost disposed to believe that they not only know the effects of a gun, but that by some sense, they ascertain whether it is loaded or not. My friend, Lieutenant Sterne, of Ballycastle, told me the following circumstance, which came lately within his knowledge. He had gone across Killala Bay to hold a court of inquiry at Pullackenny (county of Sligo), where he was shown a very large claw of an eagle, that was killed in the following manner; A young lad, whose father is a coast-guard man, shot a sea gull on the shore, and was on the point of picking it up, when to his astonishment, an eagle disputed possession of it, and seized him by the arm with his talons. The young fellow then drew his knife from his pocket, opened it with one hand

and his teeth, and succeeded in dispatching his assailant.

“And here’s for another yarn on the subject, with this difference—it occurred at home. Having not long ago heard an extraordinary story of one Marcus M’Grath, of Caryatyge, (a village near me,) having caught two *full grown eagles*, I sent my servant Owen, to hear the *particulars*, which were as follows:—M’Grath, while on his way to Ballycastle, perceived on the mountain, inside Porturlin, two eagles fighting, who after many struggles in the air, fell nearly exhausted close beside him. On perceiving him, the birds endeavoured to make off, but either through weakness, or want of wind, they were unable to rise on the wing, and so after a short race, he stunned one with a blow of his stick, and having secured by throwing his coat over it, he pursued the other, and succeeded after a time, in knocking it down also, he then attempted to carry his birds along, but finding it rather too tough a job, he pulled out their wing feathers, and left his prizes behind him, proceeding onwards to Ballycastle.

“On his return five days after his capture, strange to say, he fell in with his birds many miles asunder, and secured them. He sold them afterwards to a person of the name of Glennan, for five shillings, who sent them to his father, an eminent bird preserver in Dublin, but either from starvation or despair, from having the feathers pulled out, by which alone they could soar on high, they died on their passage to Dublin. Perhaps this is a solitary in-

stance of the capture of two full-grown eagles at the same time by one man.

"Shall I go on?" says Mr. Henri; "for I have other anecdotes."

"Oh, by all means."

"Well, here I go. When I first came to this country, a respectable old gentleman, then living, told me, and pledged his word to the truth of his statement, that for three weeks he daily had a fresh herring for his breakfast, obtained in the following singular way:—One of his tenants, every morning watched an eagle's nest on the adjoining cliff, and immediately on observing the old ones leave the nest, he descended to the ledge where the young birds were, and tied a woollen string tight round their necks, and then hid himself. The old ones on returning with a fish, and observing their children unable to eat it, immediately flew away to get another, supposing that the young rascals were capricious, and they must indulge them with a herring more to their liking. On the soaring away of the old birds, the fish was taken away and the string removed, and so the old master got his fresh-herring breakfast."

On hearing this I could not help smiling.

"Why do you smile?" said my friend.

"For the reason," said I; "did you ever read my 'Sketches in the South of Ireland?'"

"No, indeed, I did not."

"Perhaps it is well for your character as a true story teller, you did not; for therein it is related that the wife of O'Sullivan Bear, in the time of Queen

Elizabeth, was supported by a fosterer, who resorted to a trick of the very same nature to despoil the eaglets of their due, and convey it to his mistress."

"Well," says Mr. Henri, "both events may very well have occurred, but still there is a difference. What the Kerry fosterer did for necessity's sake, the Erris follower did, out of curiosity, to have it to say that his master's breakfast was supplied by eagles. And really the more I have considered the habits of these birds, the more I am struck with their sagacity: and with respect to them, and their doings, it is hard for me to draw the line between instinct and reason, both which qualities appear (to use a geological phrase) to pass into each other, and that so gradually, as to make it difficult to ascertain where one begins, and the other ends. In proof of my assertion, I need only mention, that a servant of mine, a full-grown young woman, about twenty years of age, was some few years ago lying, face downwards, on the edge of a cliff, about six hundred feet in height, looking out for some lambs beneath, when, to make use of her own words, 'she thought that a cloud had suddenly fallen on her,' and to her great dismay, found that her head was grasped by the talons of an eagle, that had cut her scalp deeply on either side; which, when she succeeded in driving off the bold bird, bled profusely. Now, as instinct would have taught the bird (I presume) what it *could* lift, and as it never could have been vain enough to think it could fly off with nine stones of bones, blood and blue veins, it struck me at the time, that the feathered philosopher reasoned thus:—'Here's a tit bit

poised nearly at her centre of gravity, on the top of a cliff. And if I can only assist her, by alighting on and adding my weight to her head in getting to the bottom, what glorious pickings I shall have.' Now, sir, should you, or any other person be disposed to differ with me on this subject, you may visit the same eminence at Cranbay, and observe, as you readily may, a brace of eagles cruising in company, then listen to their barking—see their sudden pouncings at the banks beneath, evidently intended to start their game; and when the hapless hare is driven by fright from its form in the sand hills, just mind how knowingly one bird keeps in the rear to take advantage of *the turn!!* and if you, or any other gentleman are not converted to my opinion, I give up my position as untenable."



## CHAPTER XII.

View from Benwee—A proud man made humble—Erris black mail—A man-hunt and a man-setter—Thief taken in an Eagle's nest—Dog's fate—His character as a musician—His harmony in a Chapel—Though well intended not approved—Anecdote of another Sheep-stealer made as dead as mutton by a sheep—Dunkeegan—Entrance of Broadhaven—Glengad—Cromleach and rocking-stone—Fair sex of an Erris village—A promising instructress—A sick youth, not troubled with doctors—The bloody glen—Duncarton—A Giant's Grave—Giants find graves in other lands besides Ireland—A little antiquarian anger—Parting from a valued friend—Voyage up Glenamoy river—Are ladies' bathing like seals—Scenes not very picturesque—Bog timber—How did it grow and when did it grow—Walk across a red bog—Bog MIRAGE—Its deceptions—Instance of a conscientious feeling—A district unimproved very improvable.

THERE is a coast-guard signal station near the brow of this great headland, one thousand feet above the ocean ; it may be supposed what a great range of vision is here, and on such a day as we enjoyed, it was to be sure glorious—all around, land and ocean enjoying the unusual repose of an Atlantic calm. I have already attempted to describe what might be seen seaward. Turning our backs on the northern ocean, and looking southwards, there was a curious mixture of land and water. Reader, bear in mind that the range of mountains, forming the coast of Erris, I have just passed along, being cut down from their very tops, and presenting a perpendicular face to the sea, slopes gradually inland for some miles, so that the rain which falls within a few yards of the edge of these cliffs, flows inland, and as no small

quantity weeps from the clouds, ravines are worn, which lead not into the cliffs, but at right angles to them, and into the Glenamoy river, and the estuary of Inver forming the eastern branch of Broadhaven. From the signal station we were now looking out from, apparently at our foot lay the long and narrow peninsula of the Mullet, an ugly uninteresting looking district, all brown with bog, or grey with sand ; near us the bay and harbour of Broadhaven. Further south, and almost joining it at Belmullet, the still larger and more important inlet of Blacksod, one of the most capacious landlocked harbours in Ireland—communicating, as it does, with Clew Bay, by means of the Sound of Achill ; there might be an interior navigation here of upwards of fifty miles, and certainly it is surrounded by as fine and various an amphitheatre of mountains as any in the British isles. Looking down from the cliff of Benwee, upon all this intermixture of land and water, with the large and desolate lake of Carrowmore sparkling to the south-east, and the whole surface of the visible earth (except in a few partial spots,) covered with the dull, desolate, sorrowful mantle of brown bog, with no sail upon the waters, no town on the shores,\* no habitation inland, except here and there a few huts huddled together, forming the ugliest thing in nature—a Connaught village ; you could scarcely suppose you were on a part of the British isles, or a portion of that empire which is the most wealthy, prosperous, and speculative in the world ; an empire that is now exercising its mighty energies of capital and

\* The new town of Belmullet is not visible from this point.

industry to people and to cultivate the sands of Australia, and the dense forests of New Zealand; and here is a district in a state of nature, ay, worse than a state of nature; for man seems to have yet done little else than disfigure and abuse a tract that might, in its improvable wastes, its teeming waters, its land that may all (except the mountain tops,) be made productive, the sea capable of supplying it with abundance of manure; and its bays, in which the most abounding fisheries might be established. What is the reason for all this? Why, if I were some English, American, or Continental tourist, who came to view our country through the coloured glasses of his own pre-conceived theory, I might have at once laid down the cause, and the cure for all this. But as I am a poor ignorant Irishman, who, of course, knows nothing of my own country, why I hesitate before I state the gnosis, the diagnosis, or remedy for this disease. At the same time, maybe, I'll dare to try, before I finish my book, and give an humble opinion on the subject, in a chapter which the reader may skip over, if it so pleases him.

I asked my friend, Mr. Henri, while looking abroad from this lofty station, "did his men come up here during the winter?" "Yes, they take it in turn, except on days which frequently occur, when there is such a mist on the signal station that nothing can be observed from it." "And how do the men *like* such a post?" "Why, as to their liking it, that is not the question, it is their *duty*, and they know it is for rough or smooth to be performed. I suppose it is not a very desirable service, and aware of it, I made

use of it some time since to reclaim a *proud* man. Some years ago, a fine, tall, powerful fellow was sent to the station under my command, he was abounding in self-importance and whiskers; born and bred in Munster, he somehow considered himself as a descendant of Irish kings, and though he had less education, less knowledge, and less expertness than the generality of my men, he carried his nose in the air, and sought to go it with me and others gay and easy. It so happened that a road was much wanting to be made from the little range of cottages where my men live, to the adjacent village, and so down to the sea. This deficiency was a great inconvenience to the men themselves and their families, and, therefore, in rough weather, when nothing could be done at sea, or at any distance from home, I set the men to work at making the road, which they all most gladly engaged in, except my man of might from Munster, and he, forsooth, came to me, and begged I would excuse him, for that he never was accustomed to manual labour. So I determined to humour the son of Brian Boru, and replied, 'Oh, indeed, my good sir, I beg your pardon; I would be quite sorry that you should do what is not suitable for *you*; you will therefore go up to the station post on Benwee; it is a little chilly to be sure, and rough up there, but watch your opportunities, and you may now and then have a look out in the offing; you had better keep moving up and down, lest you should go asleep and perish. I will every now and then take a run up to see how you get on. Good morning. I suppose the road will be finished in about a fortnight.' My

*fine* fellow came up here for two days ; on the third he begged to be allowed to take his turn at the road, where he worked just as gaily and ably as the rest. I never was troubled with his *gentility* afterwards."

The cliff of Benwee is to all appearance perpendicular ; it seems to go down plumb for nine hundred feet, yet it is a difficult thing to cast a stone from the top where we now stood into the sea ; either the attraction of the sides of the cliff, or its not being exactly straight down, causes your stone to fall short ; besides there are ledges, not only accessible to eagles but men. Mr. Henri told me of his capture here of a noted sheep-stealer and plunderer, who lived and throve by his dexterity in carrying off sheep, disguising them afterwards and selling them at distant fairs. In this way he made himself feared and at the same time courted by all the mountaineers, who, unable to catch him in the fact or detect him with his plunder, used to pay him black mail in order to save their flocks. He thus kept all the interior of Erris under contribution ; no one lived merrier than he, and perhaps he might have gone on in the strength of his own terror, had he not played false to his own engagements and stole the sheep of a man who duly paid his fixed tribute. This treachery was his ruin ; for all who had sheep to lose joined in the desire and determination to bring the fellow to justice. But I may as well give the transaction in Mr. Henri's *own* words.

"The country had long been annoyed by one Michael Donnelly, better known by the nickname of Borrowsky. He was amazingly fond of mutton, and



was so much dreaded, that his landlord and others made him occasional offerings as a bribe to let their wethers alone. Shortly after I got the commission of the peace, Borrowsky committed himself so that I could issue a warrant for his apprehension, and having no wethers to lose, I determined to attempt his capture; and I was spirited to this *enterprise* by the general assertion of the people that all the coast guard and police in Ireland could not catch him. Having come to this determination, at daybreak in the month of March, 1835, I sent one of my men to the mountain, near the signal tower, on pretence of shooting plover, and directed him, as soon as he thought he was not observed by any one, to hide himself in the tower and keep a good look out, and should he see Borrowsky pass, as I was sure he would, to *turn* him if possible.

“At ten o’clock a party of police joined me on pretence of attending *my court*, but the instant they arrived they were joined by the coast guard, and in a short time we, to the surprise of the country folk, formed a *cordon* on the side of the village opposite to that on which I had placed my man in the signal tower. My ground taken, we advanced and unearthed Borrowsky; unearthed I say, for he lived in a hovel, in a great measure constructed under ground. The fellow, as I expected, took the direction of the tower on his way to the cliffs; but he ran so fast, that with the assistance of a heavy hail squall, he was no sooner tallyhoed than he blinked his pursuers. On losing sight of him I made the best of my way to the signal tower, in hopes that the man there had got sight of

him, but great was my mortification to find that he had seen nothing of him. Just at this moment the hail storm abated for a few minutes, and enabled me to sweep the water-courses with my telescope, when to my great delight I spied Borrowsky crawling on his belly all along the bottom of a deep gully, and making upwards for Benwee. The view halloo was now given, and we finally succeeded in driving him over that cliff I showed you. We now had him earthed, or rather cliffed ; for we knew he was secreted along some of the ledges of this (to him well known) precipice. But the question was how to get at him. The first measure I felt disposed to adopt was, to guard the cliffs so as to force him into a capitulation by starvation ; but the weather was so dreadful, we felt assured that if we persisted in this blockade, the only difference between the pursuers and the pursued would in a few hours be, that his bones would be at the base of the cliff of Benwee and ours would be at the top of it. Not liking to order any man to go where I would not venture myself, I was on the point of making an attempt to descend the face of the cliff, when two men,—Robert Campbell, a commissioned boatman of the coast guard, and Fox, a sub-constable of police, whose names should be recorded in the annals of thief catching,—volunteered their services, and taking off their shoes, descended, armed only with their bayonets ; and in about twenty minutes they returned with Borrowsky, having achieved the novel fact of executing a warrant two-thirds down the face of a cliff nine hundred feet high, nearly perpendicular, and at the fag end of the United Kingdom, and that

in such awful weather, that the men positively declared they could *not* have fallen into the sea even had they wished it, for the wind actually forced them against and fastened them to the face of the cliff and prevented their descent.

“ But now comes the queerest part of the story : Borrowsky’s capture was ultimately effected by a dog belonging to Campbell, who actually set him in a niche of the cliff, the men from its steepness, and in a measure blinded by the wind, having passed and got down beneath without observing him. Borrowsky was secured and forwarded to jail, and in due course was transported for fourteen years ; and poor Nero (the dog) fell a victim to the ruffian revenge of some of Borrowsky’s faction, who took an opportunity of destroying him. We all regretted the poor animal, respecting his services as a man pointer ; moreover we were delighted with his voice ; he sang, like what ? a nightingale—not quite ; but he was certainly a canine Braham. Many a time have I listened to him accompanying his master in ‘ Home, sweet Home,’ till the tears trickled down my cheeks ; for his gravity in the midst of his *harmony* would have upset a judge. In proof that he was no ordinary vocalist, I must relate the following anecdote. I know you are fond of hearing what tends to raise the character of the canine race.

“ Campbell was once asked by a friend to attend a Methodist meeting ; ‘ I would willingly,’ says Campbell, ‘ but I have the dog with me, and he will disturb the congregation, for he sings—but not, as I fear, psalm tunes.’

““ Oh, that is merely a silly excuse,’ answered his friend ; ‘ I plainly see you don’t *wish* to go.’

““ You shall soon be convinced to the contrary,’ replied the other ; and in they went to the meeting. In due time the hymn was given out, and lo ! Nero pricks up his ears, as if endeavouring to catch the tune, which he had no sooner done, than to his own perfect satisfaction, but to the astonishment both of preacher and people, he joined most melodiously, so that in a few seconds the chapel became a second Babel, or rather a second farce-scene ; for the sourest or lankest visages in the whole conventicle could not keep their gravity ; and Campbell’s friend, discovering, to his religious dismay, that his friend was actually possessed of a singing dog, begged him to draw off with his vocalist.”

“ This, Mr. Henri, is certainly a good story of a dog, who, in a double sense, was a ready hand at a catch. Allow me, says I, to match your story, of a dog putting an end to a sheep-stealer, by the fact of a sheep itself operating in like manner.

“ Not many years ago there was in the county of Tipperary a sheep-stealer, as notorious as Borrowsky himself. It is easy enough to carry off, once you can catch it, a sheep in Erris, for let it be ever so fat, it is not much larger than a hare ; but a wether, fed on the rich plains of the most fertile of all Irish counties, is not so easily carried away, body and bones. But our Munster plunderer was a huge fellow, with all the bone and muscle of a Tipperary man, fed up to all his capability and vigour on the stolen mutton. He, therefore, could, and often did, carry off

from the midst of a flock a wether of twenty-eight pounds the quarter, and bring it home for the feasting of himself and his family. His practice was, to tie the sheep by the feet, put his head between the hind legs, and thus with the sheep, still alive, dangling head downwards, at his back, home trudged, in the dark night, Terry Ryan; and so he thinned many flocks, and none but himself and family were the wiser.

“In this way he had, on a dark night, got into Squire ——’s deer park, and seized a noble mutton, and tied and slung it over his head. Thus he came to the park wall, which was about eight feet high, and still weighted as he was, ventured to climb, as often he had done before. And now he is on the top of the wall, and pondering how best he may descend, when the sheep makes a sudden struggle, his footing gives way—down he goes—but, as he goes, the sheep falls inside, he outside. The rope is a good one, that keeps sheep and thief together; neither can touch the bottom—both struggle—the rope presses the fellow’s windpipe—the sheep kicks and so does Terry, but it is soon over with *him*. Next morning the herd found Terry dead as mutton, but the wether, though a little apoplectic, still a sheep and no mutton, and so proved itself the Jack Ketch of a thief, and the avenger of its race.”

With such conversation we beguiled a rather tiresome and uninteresting walk; and, reader, whenever you are tired of a work and walk, on one of the hottest days ever experienced in Ireland, I wish you may find as much creature comfort as I found,



bestowed with hearty good will, by my able, agreeable, and hospitable entertainer, at his lodge at Dunkeegan.

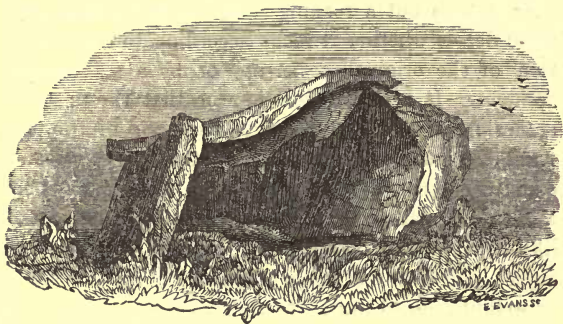
Having been successful in rowing along the north coast of Erris, and of observing, not only from a boat below, but from the top of its highest precipices, the most magnificent cliff scenery in the British Isles, and having but one day at command to remain in Erris, I was induced, by my excellent entertainer, (for such I can call him in every sense of the word,) to go with him on the following morning to view some remains of remote antiquity, that were on the other side of Inver Bay, and which he assured me were worth inspecting; so accordingly we prepared to set out in his well-appointed galley. But, before we started, I was brought to see one of those fortified promontories which I deem to be peculiar to Erris and Tyrawly, and which are called Doons. This one, called Doon-keegan, is not far from Mr. Henri's residence at Rinroe, and is not in any way dissimilar to others, except that the remains of the enclosing wall are loftier, and there was, until the storm of 1839, an arched gateway, the greater part of which is now prostrated: there are some almost obliterated remains of interior buildings.

Entering now, in the calmest weather, that part of the bay which forms the harbour of Broadhaven, we had some conversation respecting the contrast which the scenery now presented, to what is to be seen when a storm sets in from the north or north-east. I had, on a former occasion, run up towards the mouth of the harbour, with a strong south-west wind

in our stern, and it was to me a noble, but in the security of a well-appointed boat and expert crew, by no means a fearful sight. But when the wind comes from the entrance of the bay, Mr. Henri assured me that where the entrance narrows to about half a mile, the wave comes in like a perpendicular wall of from twenty to thirty feet high. This is called *Straffoda Con*, or the long rough stream of *Con*; that stream of the ocean on which the cruel stepmother queen compelled her husband's son and princely daughter to sail as swans, until disenchanted, as told in our legend of the *Leacht na Calliah*, in the *Mullet*. We now landed, and proceeded to ascend the wild upland vale called *Glengad*, and in a short time arrived at a very ugly (and where in this district is there any thing else ?) but populous village, adjoining which, and enclosed within a small potato-garden is the cromleach we were in search of. And certainly it is a great curiosity, for its top or covering rock forms a perfect rocking-stone, which a child, with one of its hands, could move up and down, but which would require the strength of many men, with all the appliances of machinery, to put out of its place. This cromleach, though not of the largest, is a fine one. Of course, the people neither know nor care any thing about it. They, as usual, call it *Darby and Grana's bed*—one of the numerous places where *Dermot* (the *Paris* of the Celtic heroic story) took shelter with the frail and fond *Grana*, when they fled from the enraged *Fin M'Coull*—he all the while following, and they, to hide from him, setting up and sleeping under these huge grey stones every night. Their love must have been very

fervid, to keep warm in such cold lodging as this. But the curiosity of this particular bed of bold Dermot and his Leman Grana is, that it is not only a cromleach but a rocking-stone; and the difficulty is, to decide whether it rocks according to the intention of the original setter-up, or by a subsequent accident. It certainly does appear that the upright stones have given to one side, that one of the uprights seems now of no use, for the covering-stone does not touch it in any place, so that in fact the said covering-stone is held up but by two supports, like a lozenge or card suspended by its opposite angles, and so it vibrates with the least possible force or weight applied to it. If this rocking quality has been acquired by accident it is curious—if by original purpose it is ingenious. And indeed I am disposed to consider that the rocking property is intentional from the following fact, that there is an almost exactly similar rocking cromleach in France, as will be seen from the following translation from "*Les monuments Celtiques par Monsieur Cambray*:"—"In the department of Loire inferieure, at a place called Portfessan, is a monument which consists of three enormous stones, the greater portion of each sunk in the earth; the other parts which appear above ground are about ten or twelve feet in height; the length of these stones is about eight or ten feet, and about one and a half in thickness. On the top of these stones is placed a fourth of triangular form of the same thickness as those upon which it is placed; it is so fixed that it can be moved by the least force applied to it." At any rate thus it

is, and I hope will be—for the people seemed to have a sort of superstitious veneration for it, and I did my best to impress on those who could under-



stand me, how bad, how unlucky, how disgraceful to the old giants of Ireland it would be, if they would let any injury be done to it.\* While measuring and

\* The following is my friend Mr. Henri's more accurate description of this monument:—

“The cromleach is a collection of seven large stones, six of which form three sides of a quadrangle, ‘*moored church fashion*,’ as a sailor would say; that is *true*, not magnetic, east and west, or nearly so. They are thus disposed: one long one, on which one end of the rocking-stone is supported, forms the south side of the incomplete quadrangle; three are on the eastern side, lying at angles apparently under  $45^{\circ}$ , and pointing outwards, that is to the eastward and two on the north side, on the eastern of which, which inclines inwards, or to the south, rests the northern end of the rocking-stone, while the western one is nearly erect. The western side of the quadrangle is unoccupied, as I have already remarked; the rocking-stone, which a child might set in motion, and the axis of the motion of which appears to be about north and south, lies dipping to the north apparently about  $10^{\circ}$ , somewhat resembling in shape a shoulder of mutton, the shank being to the eastward, and is of the following dimensions: extreme

sketching this rare and curious antique, the inmates of the tottering hovels that ranged along the ditch of the potato-garden in which was the cromleach, all poured out—for it was about dinner time—and it was not a bad opportunity to see the inhabitants of an Erris village in their everyday costume and appearance; and certainly they were a rude and smoked

length from east to west, 9 feet 8 inches; extreme breadth from north to south, 8 feet 2 inches; greatest thickness of the stone at the western side, 1 foot 4 inches, which thickness gradually reduces to, if my memory fail me not, about 6 inches. Its height from the ground on the northern side, measuring from the under side, 2 feet 6 inches; on the south side 4 feet 4 inches. The stone is chiefly composed of that compound so common in Erris, viz. quartz and crystals of mica; its specific gravity, by my calculation, is 2.97, and its weight about  $57\frac{1}{2}$  cwt. So much for *facts*, now for assertions. An apparently intelligent man who was on the spot, informed me, that eighty years ago the whole was nearly covered by the surrounding bog, and that at that time a pot of money was found a few feet to the eastward; he also informed me, that about thirty-five years ago the country people cleared away the bog and earth around the stones to the present depth, when the stones to the eastward gradually gave way, and the cromleach, *which was formerly supported by all the stones beneath*, adjusted itself, as at present, on two, and *became a rocking stone*. He moreover asserted that it was gradually coming to the ground, but it appeared to me in exactly the same situation I saw it in fifteen years ago. Another countryman told me with the greatest confidence, it was placed on its supporters by a giant named 'Darby,' and observing a smile on my countenance, pointed with great exultation to, I believe, *four* circular depressions on the *upper* side of the western end of the stone, which he asserted were the marks of the giant's fingers. I did not venture to hint that the finger marks ought to be on the *under* side of the stone, and he, construing my silence into admission, eyed the lookers on with an air of triumph, and with a look that expressed as plainly as a look could express, 'I have floored the *long sassenach* in prime style.'"

set—the men tall, bony, but not muscular—those even in mid-age not strong or healthy—those more advanced in years sallow, wrinkled, and dried up as it were before their time. Some of the women, were they clean, would have been not uncomely; but in general their skins were dark and sallow, as they must be from the effects of dirt, smoke, and bad potato fare, as well as from natural complexion. Their hair was of that dark madder hue which seems peculiar to the western Irish, and which is never seen amongst the better classes: it is not red or crimson—not the tint of a carrot, or a brick, or of mahogany—I think it has more the tint of faded morocco leather than any thing I can just think of. This kind of hair is generally coarse, strong and wavy in its lines, while it hangs, as the wild girls let it, falling over their necks, and is in general accompanied with dark eyes, high cheek-bones, and a large mouth. Out of one cabin a multitude of girls, aged from ten to fourteen years, poured, almost all with hair, complexion, and countenance of the character I have just described, all dressed in woollen boddice and petticoat of home manufacture, and without any dye whatsoever, but the colour of the wild sheep's back, and without any head or foot gear whatsoever; light and agile in their forms, with wild and wondering eyes they stood and looked at us. In the middle of them was a female of quite different appearance; she was about twenty, short and fat in form, rather fair and comely in countenance, but of a very assured and pert expression—her hair snooded up, and fixed at top with a huge mock tortoise-shell



comb—her gown a gaudy cotton, with salmon-coloured shawl—altogether such a flashy thing as might be seen in the street of a country town of a market-day. Seeing her so different from the rest, I begged very civilly to know was she a native of the village?

“No, she is from Crosmolina.”

“Is she long here?”

“No.”

“What brought her?”

“She came to teach the young women needle-work.”

“Then you keep a needle-work school?”

“Yes.”

“You seem to have many scholars.”

“Oh yes; aren’t they a *dacent* set?”

“What do you charge?”

“Half-a-crown a quarter.”

Here one of the coast guard who was with us interfered, and said,—“How can you tell the gentleman such an untruth? Don’t I know you get no such money from the poor-creatures. I wonder a respectable person like you would palm such a falsehood on a strange gentleman.”

To this she replied, with a saucy toss of her head,—“What for does the like of him be coming and asking about such matters? what is it to him what I get?”

Considering that this very saucy lass must be a bad companion for such poor ignorant creatures, however well she might teach them needle-work, I moved away from her vicinity, convinced that there

is a desire amongst the poor for improvement, and as they have not been as yet cared for by government, landlords, or clergy, they seek a supply for themselves, and of course are obliged, as in this instance, to put up with what they can get.

Proceeding a little further, I met a young man, leaning listlessly against the ditch of the potato-garden, very tall, pale, and attenuated. He had come out, like the rest, to see the strangers, but there was no active curiosity in his lustreless eye ; and as he stood, with a foul cotton handkerchief encircling his head and brow, with his ragged coat and trowsers that he seemed in length to have outgrown, but which hung loose enough about him—he appeared as sad a specimen of a comely youth withering under the blight of consumption as I ever beheld.

“What is the matter with you, young man ?” I said.

Here an elderly person interfered, and took up the answer :—“Oh indeed, sir, he can’t tell what ails him ; they say the evil eye has been cast on him ; at any rate he can’t do a hand’s turn of work ; he can’t eat the praties, and troth myself don’t know what to do to get him the flour and bread from Belmullet, and maybe when it does come he won’t touch it.”

“Has the doctor ever seen him ?”

“Oh then, what would bring the docthor here ? The neighbours wanted me to send for the fairy man, but he don’t like that himself ; anyhow he’s a sore weight on a poor man’s hands, and if God were not good, it’s myself doesn’t know what would become of us.”

Leaving this poor youth, I of course gave the father some silver to procure the fading lad some nourishing food, hoping he had but outgrown his strength, and that some strong food might give a new tone to his vital powers ; remembering also, as I well did, that I would, just at his period of life, have sunk also as outgrowing myself, had I not plenty of Tipperary beef and mutton, placed at all hours at my disposal.

Proceeding northward from this village, and ascending the side of an upland ridge, we in our way towards another object of curiosity, looked down on a very pretty glen, or rather basin, scooped as it were out of this assemblage of low mountains, and which, shelving down equally on either side, gathered the waters so as to form a lively rill in its centre ; and so this pretty semicircular amphitheatre, looking all green and grassy, opened itself towards the west, and exposed in the direction of the flow of its waters a view of the now placid Broadhaven, and of the Mullet beyond it. While descending the southern ridge of this green and secluded vale, disfigured by an ugly village, but dotted here and there with cattle, a man came up, and pointing to a lame mule not far off, he begged of Mr. Henri to cure him, for he was his all in all in the way of livelihood. I was glad to see the feeling of interest Mr. H. took, and the thorough reliance the man reposed on his skill and good-will ; but the poor beast was past relief, he was desperately shoulder-lipped.

Proceeding a little further we met a boy, and asked him the name of the glen. He gave a name

in Irish, which one of our company understanding Irish interpreted as the Bloody or the Bleeding Glen.

“Why is it called Bloody Glen?” I desired our interpreter to ask the boy.

“Why else,” was the reply, “but because a bloody battle was fought here.”

“By whom?”

“How can the likes of me tell?”

“Why, have you never heard?”

“Och, to be sure I have, of two giants. One that kept on the shore of Inver on the Doon there; another far away to the south beyond Lough Carrowmore.”

“Now,” said I, “that is the old legend about Donald Doulwee. I make no doubt that there was a battle fought here, perhaps between the rival Vickyngs or sea kings; no doubt the rocking cromlech we have been just inspecting is the tomb of one of the combatants; and perhaps the remains we are now going to inspect are the resting-places of the warriors who fell of the other army.”

Speculating this way, and amusing ourselves during a long lazy day by hammering out specimens of a rare mineral, the Kyanite, found rather abundantly in the primary rocks of this immediate district, we at length thought it necessary to pass on; and, rising on the other side of this secluded vale, we met a comely intelligent looking young woman, driving a few spancelled sheep.

“Ask that young woman,” said I to the coast

guard, who spoke Irish, "what is the name of this glen."

He accordingly did so, and received for answer that it was "the Bleeding Glen."

"Why is it so called?"

"Because in old times, when there was a great deal of cattle on these hills, they used to be driven down in the early summer into this quiet place, where the people could keep them all together, and here they were bled to keep away the murrain."

"Well now," says Mr. Henri, "I think this anti-romantic and anti-heroic explanation is the truest. I think the cow-doctors rather than the giants have made this a scene of blood."

"If this," said I, "be the right explanation of the Irish name of this locality, all our disquisitions concerning the battles of the sea kings must come to an end."

"These conflicting accounts," says Mr. Henri, "put me in mind of a story which, for aught I know, may be in Joe Miller; but, at any rate, here it is.

"An antiquary once travelling through the south of England in search of food for his hobbyhorse wherever he went, being struck with the appearance of an old stone gateway, asked its name, and was altogether delighted when told it was called "Cæsar's Gate;" he immediately commenced exploring the vicinity, and, after many hours of anxious search, felt convinced that he had traced the VALLUM, the FOSSE, and the PRETORIUM of a Roman camp, and he was just departing with the intention of writing

an account to the Archæologia of his discovery, when he was thrown aback by hearing his guide exclaim—"Old Cæsar is a deuced good old chap." "Cæsar is! why, what do you mean?" exclaims the antiquary. "Why, I mean what I say," says Hodge; "Old Cæsar the jobber lives in yon farm-house. He brews the best ale in all the country round, and he built this gate twenty years ago."

"This reminds me," says I, "of the inscription found cut in a block of stone on the side of a hill in the county of Kilkenny about sixty years ago. General Vallancey and all the antiquarians of the day were occupied in deciphering it. It was Ogham—it was Phœnician—it had relation to the worship of the Tyrian Bacchus, and what not. In the midst of this pother, some strong fellow unhappily turned the stone down side up, and the Ogham read off easily as the name of an old mason, (Darby Moran, I believe,) and bore the date of 1731.

"But come," said I, "I will not yet give up my fancy that this has been the scene of a mortal struggle. Are we not going to where we shall see a giant's grave and a Druidical circle? In the mean time, in allusion to what the young woman has said about this being a bleeding-place for cattle, let me ask you do the people make use of the blood they thus draw from their cattle as food?"

"Not that I ever heard of."

"Well, though I have never witnessed the practice, I have heard that a usage, handed down from the old Ulster creaghts, was, if not still resorted to, not many years ago practised in the mountain districts of Tyrone



and Derry. The cattle of all sorts were brought to be bled at a certain smooth and well cleaned off spot, and as fast as the blood fell from one beast after another, and as it coagulated, salt was thrown over it, and then the bleeding began afresh, and thus another layer of the sanguine mass was added, and so on, until a little mound was formed of the solidified substance, and this being by-and-by cut out in squares and laid up, was used as food by the mountaineers in the scarce and dear time of the year. I remember a good many years ago, when I lived in the county of Cavan, hearing a person endeavouring to insult a Tyrone man, by accusing his country folk of quaffing foal's blood instead of drinking cow's milk, and of eating horse beef for their Christmas dinner. The horse beef was afterwards explained to me by the well-known fact, that the small two years' old beef, which is much used about Christmas in the north of Ireland, is brought to market dangling in quarters from the side of a horse : hence horse beef. But the Ulster men need not be ashamed of their food. Is not any meat at all, even suppose it were carried to market on the carcase of a horse, better than the unvaried potato of the Connaught man ?"

We now having got out of this rather pretty glen, came down on the shore of Inver Bay, and soon found what we were in search of—one of those fortified promontories peculiar to this district, and which is not only laid down in the Ordnance map, but also known in the legendary history of the country as Doon Carton. This stronghold is just opposite and within sight of a similar one on the northern side of

this bay, and which I have already noticed as Doon-keegan. These two places of arms and of defence, evidently gave their possessors in old times military possession of this inlet, and though at all times a sorry sort of fortification, consisting of a dry ditch and stone wall thrown across a narrow neck leading to a promontory of less than an acre, on which are the foundations of a few rude buildings, yet evidently Doon Carton is of the same character as Dunamoa in the Mullet, and Doon Patrick in Tyrawly, and Doon Eangus on the south isles of Arran, the work of the same people; like the burrows of the water-rat, they were the strongholds of those who came by the sea, lived much on the sea, and desired to have a ready retreat to that element.

We now ascended from the sea, and proceeded eastward along the side of Glengad mountain, until we came to another village a little more respectable than that where the rocking cromleach was, and here adjoining to one of its houses—and it was of rather aristocratic character, for it had gable ends, a chimney, and a little window with, I believe, *two* panes of glass whole, out of four which it ought to have had—was a giant's grave; that is, an oblong sort of cyst or trough composed of large stones set on their ends, about eighteen feet long and four feet wide; if there were (as there often are) stones or flags covering this trough or cyst, they had been removed long since, and sundry such stones were in fact lying about as if removed out of their proper place. But the woman residing in the cabin, who could speak English, said that the place was a giant's grave; that it was

always as it now is, and that she knew nothing at all about it, but that it was a giant's grave,\* but what giant, musha, herself could not tell.

Not far to the east of this we saw a Druidical circle of small dimensions, and consisting of upright stones, neither large nor lofty. And here I must accuse my companions, Messrs. H. and C. of an act of anti-quarian sacrilege, of the sin of which I endeavoured, I hope with success, to convince them. Some days previous to our visiting this place, they happened to pass it by on some sporting excursion, and hearing from some one how a neighbour had dreamt that there was money under these stones, they, out of fun, set to to throw down one of them; and when, after more labour than they bargained for, and not without the angry and scowling looks of the people, they had uprooted one of them, they hastily picked up, and as it were with great anxiety, some silver pieces, a shilling and sixpences, which they had contrived previously to cast in; of course they made a mystery of what they got, both as to the quantity and quality, and made haste to leave the place. And now on their return it was perceived that every stone composing the circle had been rooted up, although there

\* Olaus Wormius states, that in Denmark the people call similar monuments giants' graves. His words are, "Diversi ab his quidem cernuntur tumuli figura oblongiori, congeries depressiori, saxis grandioribus undique cincti ita ut utramque extremitatem mole vastiora reliquis claudant, in medio ut plurimum ara exstat, in hisce vulgus gigantes sepultas credit, quorum ossa etiam haud raro e talibus effodiuntur, sed ego ejusmodi integris etiam familiis destinatos puto, unde et in his aræ quæ communia sacrificia prototius gentis incolumitate inmolata excipiant."—*Monumenta Danica*, p. 36.

appeared such repugnance to the gentlemen moving them ; but if overturned, as they evidently were, care was also taken to set them up again in their former position ; and now the villagers with apparent good humour seemed to consider that it was a hoax passed on them ; but it is to be questioned whether, if the hoaxers were not known to be of some power and character for fearlessness, they would have been allowed to have their fun so much to themselves. I think a respect for the ancient monuments of the land should form part of the education of every gentleman, and respecting those who ventured on this prank, I am quite sure there are not *now* two men in Ireland who would more object to any thing of the kind being injured, not to say obliterated. But, alas ! how many a fine monument of the very old time has been destroyed by dreamers, money-hunters, and capability men. A gentleman calling himself an engineer, and from whom better things ought to be expected, in his recent account of a district of this western province, tells his readers as coolly as if he were removing the nuisance of a heap of rubbish, that to carry on his new road straight, he overturned a cromleach and blew it out of his way. I wish he may never do such a feat again, even supposing by his abstinence from removing such rubbish he deflects his new road a very little from its beautiful straightness.

I do not think I have any thing more to narrate of my personal observations in Erris.\*

\* In taking leave of my friend Mr. Henri, I cannot help not only expressing my gratitude for his attention to my personal accommodation, and for the information he has

The following day Mr. Henri accommodated me with the use of a little punt, and the aid of two men to row me up the tide-water of the Glenamoy river so far that it would be an easy walk from the spot where the water ceased to be boatable to the bridge over the new road, nigh where my good friend, Mr. Sterne,

afforded me, but my admiration for his talents, and wonder that an officer, so highly gifted, and so well calculated to serve her Majesty ably and faithfully, should be left for eighteen years to waste away his life on a promontory in Erris. It seems to me that the notion that the Errisians entertain that men are purgatorially condemned to pass into seals might be allegorically applied to him; for here is a superior mind condemned to a sort of amphibious animal existence, either basking on the dreary shore, or toddling off his rock into the sea, to catch nothing but fish, and bob up and down after the salmon. An extract from a letter I lately received from him will show that he has seen some service, and is fitted for more active usefulness:—"Independent of sixteen years' servitude afloat (*ten as a commissioned officer!*) during which time I met with rather more than my allowance of naval rubs, for I once had my life saved by the tail of a gend'arme's horse! and was popped into a Dutch prison with a keg of salt water in my stomach; and on another occasion (I merely give these as samples,) between the hours of *one and four* on a winter's night, or rather morning, I had *six* different escapes from death,—viz. *two* from drowning, (all hands but one man, whom with God's assistance I saved, and myself were drowned); *two* from falling into the breakers beneath, whilst climbing a high cliff, at the base of which I was wrecked; *one* from being frozen to death, after fainting on surmounting the cliff, and *one* from being shot for a *thief* by a poor farmer, who could not be persuaded that any human being could climb the cliff I told him I had climbed, and consequently took me for a *ruffian*, who only wished to gain admittance into his house to murder him and his family. Independent, I repeat, of my sea service, I have played *second fiddle to Alexander Selkirk eighteen years!* during which time I have held the commission of the peace seven years."

promised to have his jaunting-car waiting for me. On the former occasion when leaving Erris, this river of Glenamoy was so swollen, and sent down such a furious torrent, that no boat could stem its force, and then I had recourse, as I have already most pathetically narrated, to a passage over mountain and bog. Now, what with a neap tide and low state of the fresh water in the river, it was with the utmost difficulty, with rowing, polling, and one of the men, while wading, pushing us along, that we could manage to get on for about seven miles; and certainly nothing could be more uninteresting than the passage up this desolate water, that flows sluggishly in dry weather, which, to be sure, does not often occur, through the waste of bog on every side. Sunk down as we were in the punt, little could be seen except the gloomy bog banks on either side, and at a distance of a few miles the mean, shall I say vulgar, pig-backed ranges of the north Erris mountains, which, however grand they may be when cut down perpendicularly as forming the lofty cliffs of the coast, are any thing but interesting in the interior.

Just where the river forms the estuary of Inver, and for about a mile above the ferry, I was amused observing the seals every now and then pushing up their round brown heads above the water, and going down again when they saw our boat. I am not at all surprised at the stories of mermaids and kelpies. A seal's head, rising thus out of the water, is very like that of a woman, when her hair is short and flattened to her skull as she rises from her bath. These seals do, as I understand, infinite mischief to the fishery, and



render it almost unprofitable ; all this is a proof how much the district is neglected, when eagles, foxes, and badgers are allowed to diminish the game on land ; and otters, seals, and what perhaps is more destructive, poachers taking the spent salmon, by night with lights, spearing them as they return to the sea, are suffered to work away, unmolested. In urging our slow way up this water, I had an opportunity to remark along the boggy banks, and also along those of the lateral streams flowing in where the banks were worn away much, and the *débris* of the bogs carried down in rounded masses, and strewing the shallows as we went along, that immense roots of the bog fir-trees were laid bare, as they spread their horizontal limbs on every side, and reposed not on the gravel below the bog, but on the bog itself ; and in many instances, as these roots, in the manner of great bird's claws, extended themselves in a circumference of at least twenty feet, there was as much bog under as over them. How is this to be accounted for ? Is it not generally supposed that the timber has caused the bog, and in its fall and decay, in its arrest of the waters, and in its subsequent generation of water plants and deposits of aquatic vegetable matter, that the morass has turned into a bog or moss, and that as the primary cause of all this, the timber must remain, as far as its roots are concerned, at the bottom ? But here it is not so, and I observed, as in other places, from five to eight feet of bog below the roots that with their stems sat horizontally, as there they had grown, there made a large and flourishing tree, and there by some sudden process

had been destroyed. I don't think it will meet the difficulty to assert that these roots and these stems have floated here, and were suspended in the boggy matter once as soft as mud; first, because, in some instances, the tree (as is the case of one uprooted by a storm) would have its roots perpendicular to the horizon; secondly, if so light as to be suspended in the muddy matter, some would come to the surface, or be at different depths; but this is not the case, the roots are always horizontal, they are at the same line of depth; they, in fact, seem to have grown where they now are, and the difficulty is to account for how the underlying bog was formed, how such large timber could grow in bog, and how it was subsequently overthrown; for experience shows us that by no present means we may use, can fir-trees of any species be got to grow to any size upon bog; let us drain it and improve it as we may. Yet the bogs of Ireland, covering our great central flats, covering for twenty miles inland the hills and dales from Erris point to the Bay of Galway; nay more, whether in the flats or on the champaign, or the mountain side (and that when exposed to the Atlantic storm, where no kind of tree could now be got to grow an inch,) contain oak and fir, of larger scantling than is generally to be found in any European forest.

But the difficulty does not stop here: how are we to explain, that though fir timber is found so abundantly, and of the best quality in our bogs, it never was found *growing* by the existing races of men? Leaving out of the question that the memory of the oldest man cannot call to mind ever having seen a

native fir or pinei tree, our oldest records or traditions make no mention of any such growth. All trees producing turpentine have been planted by modern improvers, from plants or seeds originally imported. Hence I am led to come to the conclusion at any rate, that some great change in the climate and character of the island took place when it ceased to be a pine growing country.

From the place where our punt took ground, and would carry us no further towards Glenamoy Bridge, we had to walk across the bog about two miles, and in order to avoid the broad gulleys of the lateral streams as they passed into the river, we took straight across the moss in a south-east direction ; the bog was now comparatively dry and walkable, and to be sure it was a dreary sight to look all around on this waste, containing within encircling hills a comparative flat of many square miles, not one hundred feet above the sea, with a river easily made navigable flowing through its centre, and not a sign of human industry, or human habitation, except on the line of the new road, where recently erected adjoining the bridge over the river, one or two cabins, and a few turf stacks were visible. Save for these, the centre of Australia could not be more a desert. Here, while crossing the bog, I observed what I have often witnessed in the Bog of Allen and other large boglands of Ireland, the mirage, which, in a very hot day makes all before you seem a broad and placid lake, and the eminences at the extreme verge of the horizon as islands rising above the water, and lifted much higher than they

really are. Here there were no groves, as I have seen them on the verge of the Bog of Allen, lifted up in the air, and forming wooded promontories and islets, amidst the surrounding water ; but here were the dreary hills rising like Innisgloria or Inniskea from the mirrored surface, and the delusion was so great that for a time you could not but believe that some lake or sea inlet was before you. It was well that I had something to amuse me, for it was a toilsome and vexatious walk, and I was glad when the bridge was pointed out, and still more pleased when I saw the jaunting-car waiting for me.

I shall close this, my personal experience of Erris, by a trait of the conscientious religious feeling of one of my companions, which, though considering him mistaken, I gave him full credit for entertaining, observing the deep sincerity he evinced. I had been provided with a good meat luncheon, and a bottle of—I won't say what—but certainly stronger and more agreeable than the bog water of Erris—said country being sadly deficient in spring wells free from iron and moory matter. So sitting down under the shade of the bridge, we all commenced at our mutton and ham—the *all* consisting of a coast-guard man, the driver of Mr. Sterne's jaunting-car, and Mr. Henri's servant, the good and trusty fellow who, on a former and more perilous occasion, had brought me through all my difficulties. Well, just as we were in the midst of our entertainment, the coast-guard, a merry fellow and a Protestant, says, most mischievously,—

“Well, boys, we are all eating meat so heartily, and I hope it is not Friday.” The fellow knew well enough it was that meagre day.

“Och, then, sure enough it is, and how came I to forget it,” says the man beside him, bouncing up, sputtering the meat out of his mouth, and hastening down to the stream of water to wash his hands and face, and so as well as he could, get rid of the forbidden thing. The coast-guard whispered me, that all this show of horror was pretended, that the man remembered to *forget* it was Friday, and that he was not annoyed at eating the meat, but at being put in mind that he ought not to have touched it. I did not think so badly of the poor fellow—if he did not feel horror at his deed, I don’t think I ever saw any one act it better.

I don’t think I have seen any where a more improvable tract than the district drained by the Glenamoy river; it is not a dead flat, there are ample swells of ground to serve for drainage; it is not too high above the level of the sea, it is protected from the ocean blast by the hills along the coast; it is not, I believe, far from limestone. As I approached Belderrig, I saw along the line of road some drainage, some burning of the surface, and other slender attempts at improvement, but still there was the evident timorousness and weakness belonging to a man who did not desire to let much of his capital get out of sight; he did not seem to have much faith in his experiment.

## CHAPTER XIII.

General observations respecting Erris—Its ancient possessors—Its change of ownership—A Protestant colony—Their hardships—Character of the descendants of these colonists—Stock farmers, not improvers—A priest a husbandman, and why shouldn't he—A hint to his Reverence and an anecdote—Mullet farming—A gowl gob ???—Making rent by means of the tail—Wealth without comfort—Craft begets craft—Clergy pleasing to live must live to please—Consequences—

A house contrived a double debt to pay,

A still by night, a place of prayer by day—

Hugh Gallaher's stratagem won't do—State of education—Population—Manners—Arguments about horses' tails, in which horses are not consulted—Materia medica—Bullet bolus—Cheating the Devil—A kiss rough but kind—A Priest over-reached and angry—Phil More's evasion of an oath—An evil eye and its effects, and how averted—Broth as delicate as delicious—A Horse cured by an old woman—A Cow shot by the fairies—Doctor M'Grath and his drink of three halfpence.

ERRIS may, at some future period, be visited by tourists, and they may find subjects of inherent interest, and accommodations sufficient to please themselves, and to encourage others to follow in their track; but certainly just now, unless well recommended, as I was, to the hospitality of resident gentry, there are few facilities for the tourist, or any thing so attractive as to induce him to undergo privations and annoyances of no small account. I therefore, think I may as well *pro bono publico* set down what information I have gathered concerning this district, which certainly has been less visited than any other portion of Ireland, and is more completely shut out and separated by bog and mountai



I have already observed, that except its sea coast, there is nothing grand or beautiful—that to the mere searcher for scenery it is, on the whole, uninteresting; but that to a person desirous to inquire into the habits and manners of a very unimproved and neglected people, there is much to learn, much to amuse, and also much to lament. I will, therefore, touch upon the history, the education, the manners, and the superstitions of the people, and then, after discussing the capabilities of the country, give my humble opinion as to the best mode of improving it.

This district, in ancient times, belonged to the sect of the O'Flahertys, and subsequently to the Barretts and Burkes. After the great change of property, the consequence of the Cromwellian conquest, it came into the hands of an Irish placeman, Sir James Shaen. His son Arthur, when times became more secure, and the act of settlement gave the security the new proprietary wanted, introduced a colony of Protestants, who were located principally in the peninsula of the Mullet, and were accompanied by a clergyman of their own persuasion, and under the inspection and encouragement of their landlord, who gave them leases in perpetuity, and afforded them every facility; they threw most of the available land into stock farms, forcing the natives to retire to the mountain glens of the interior.

It is evident that the men, who had the courage to undertake this settlement, had also the moral energy to persevere; therefore, while this generation lasted, improvements went on, a better breed of cattle and superior tillage were introduced, and

though they were annoyed and robbed by the old natives,\* still the colony prospered as well as circum-

\* The following petition, for which I am indebted to Mr. Knight's very useful work on Erris, and which was addressed to the President of Connaught, Sir H. Bingham, in Queen Anne's reign, shows a state of things in Ireland, with regard to colonization, very similar to what settlers are now subject to in Australia, or on the border districts of our South African colony:—

“The humble petition of the subscribers in behalf of themselves and others the Protestant inhabitants in the half-barony of Erris, most humbly offered to the Honourable Sir Henry Bingham,

“SHOWETH,

“That your petitioners (*her Majestie's* most loyal subjects),\* however, since their coming to the country, met with several discouragements by the wicked combinations of those that are no friends to the Protestant interest. For, not to mention the many depredations committed by privateers, (which, though the laws in that case do redress, yet have been a great uneasiness, and the trouble and expense in recovering the same has been no little,) the Papists have since taken such measures as might escape your petitioners, and now effectually ruined us; and that is, by the most secret artifices of stealing our cattle, to the number of seventy-five, within the space of nine months, besides sheep without number, not to mention the plundering of our gardens, stealing our corn, both out of the field and haggard, &c. The natives had carried all so privately, and the plot so well laid, that it was by mere accident that the late discoveries have been made; and they are since closely confined by your honour, which service has laid your petitioners under the greatest obligations imaginable. And your petitioners most humbly beg that your honour will be pleased not to bail them for such reasons as the bearer will make known to your honour, and which would be too tedious here to insert.—We humbly beg your honour's pardon for this trouble, which our great grievances, however, forced us to, and do entirely throw ourselves on your honour's protection, not doubting but Sir Arthur Shaen will make a grateful acknowledgment of all your honour's good offices and services, as do your

\* This shows the date to be in the reign of Queen Anne. The original is not dated.

stances would admit. But here, as indeed elsewhere all over Ireland, and at all times of its history, the generation that succeeded the first settlers was of a very deteriorated character. I believe no race of men was ever known to have changed character so rapidly as the Cromwellian settlers; the descendants of the stiff, stern, often fanatical, sometimes pious Puritans, Baptists, and Presbyterians, became the most profligate and careless of mankind. It has been always the character of the English settlers in Ireland to become "*ipsis Hibernis Hiberniores*;" but I believe no race so rapidly adopted the wild extravagant character of the Irish as the Cromwellian. Before half a century had elapsed, properties that had been divided amongst soldiers, officers, and adventurers, were lavished and spent as easily as they had been acquired; and instances are on record of estates, now worth thousands per annum, being exchanged for a horse, a setting dog, or some even more vicious accommodation; and as in all times and places where there are spendthrifts, there will be accumulators, in a comparatively short time a vast quantity of the small Cromwellian allotments was absorbed and merged into the possession of watchful and clever

honour's petitioners, and will ever pray for your honour's health and prosperity.

"Thos. Higginbotham,  
James Maxwell,  
John Dennistoun,  
Will. Linney,  
Clement Langford,  
Josiah Tollett,

George Houston,  
Peter Houston,  
Phill. Parker,  
Henry Gamble,  
Sam. Calwell,  
Sam. Lon."

—*Knight*, p. 64.

appropriators,\* and still the evil remained as from the beginning, and still continues, of the country

\* "The consequence of introducing the natives to the cultivation of the soil as cotters or tenants was, that these settlers, exacting considerable rent, both in money, service, and produce, became all petty landlords, and having themselves little or no rent to pay, the cultivation of the soil by *them* became entirely neglected;—they barely shared the run-ridge of the tenant as far as a couple of sums, for the feeding of the host of followers, nurses and nurses' children to the third and fourth generation, that swarmed their well-stored kitchens. The sheep, the pig, the chickens, the fish, the crock of butter, (*sold by the quart*,) the whiskey,—all were supplied by the cotters, without any labour or trouble of the 'master' at the 'big house;' who, having nothing to do, generally fell into habits of expense and dissipation, which were eventually his ruin. The head rent and renewal fines were allowed to run on unpaid to such an extent, that of the whole Shaen estate in Erris, containing 95,000 acres, less than one-half are not *now* held under the original perpetuities. On these are now found the description of holders in the statistical table; and of the original settlers who signed that petition, only two at present exist in Erris, and one (Parker) out of it; the remainder being entirely extinct in the male line: and it is also remarkable, that these three families still continue 'Protestants,' though all the others that remained in the country had become 'Papists.'

"Sir Arthur Shaen resided for some time in Erris, or at least frequently visited it, until he saw the whole colony finally settled, each individual on his own division of land, and probably prospering under his own immediate protection and superintendence;—subject, however, in the intervals of his absence, to the inroads of the natives alluded to in the old petition. There is no trace of any residence built for himself by Sir Arthur, nor of any work of note being completed. He, however, saw also the advantageous position of Belmullet, and the importance of making a cut between the two bays, and commenced, but did not complete, one at the narrowest part, which is still called 'Shaen's Cut.' The furnace also already alluded to, on the banks of the river of Cloneen, for smelting iron, was one of his works not prosecuted to any perfection. Sir Arthur Shaen having only two daughters, the second married to Henry Boyle Carter, of

being partitioned amongst a comparatively small proprietary, who had neither the means, the knowledge, nor desire to improve their huge possessions. This evil has been universal all over the island—it has always prevailed in Connaught; it has been excessive the more we approach the west, and in Connemara, Joice's Country, Achill, and Erris, it has hitherto been the great bar to improvement; and it is to be found that in many cases, though, of course, not in all, the lords of these wide wastes, jealous of their ownerships, have preferred to be like Selkirk, the monarchs of all they survey, even suppose it were profitless bog and mountain, rather than part upon a long lease with what might call for capital in its improvement, or give remuneration to those who would expend time, industry, and knowledge, in making it productive. In Erris, the original lessees of Sir Arthur Shaen, instead of devoting themselves to husbandry, to enclosing, tilling, and manuring their allotments, and acting the part of industrious yeomen, became merely stock owners, running their cattle over tracts that remained in their hands as unimproved as ever. I don't believe stockmen ever have, or ever will improve any country. They have,

Castlemain, in the county of Kildare, Esq., the eldest to John Bingham of Newbrook, in the county of Mayo, Esq. the property was left in equal shares between them. The Carter half still remains entire, in the present possessor, William H. Carter, Esq.; but of the Bingham half, part is now held in fee by Counsellor Everard, Knox of Rappa, Mr. M'Donnell of Carnacon, Kirkwood of Cottlestown, Miss Nash of Carn, within the Mullet; Major Bingham still retaining a considerable part. Major Cormick and the Bishop of Killala are the other proprietors."—*Knight*, pp. 65, 67.

in a great measure, kept Connaught unimproved, and a large portion of South America; in the same way will they keep back Australia. The life of a stockman must for a great part of the year be inactive, therefore amongst uneducated men, sporting and carousing will naturally ensue; hence expenditure greater than income, embarrassment, a diminished stock, property parted with, and eventual ruin.

The lessees of Sir Arthur Shaen *would* be gentlemen of the character I have just alluded to, and they in a great measure have ceased to exist as gentry; for very few indeed of those names recorded, as holding under the original grant, are now known in Erris, and of these few, some have descended and mixed with the common people both in religion, condition, and manners; for it has been remarked not only here, but elsewhere, that when Protestants, either from intermarriage or other causes, become Roman Catholics, they sink in the scale of civilization, and become sometimes worse, never better, than the common people.

Erris then is now, and has been for many years, in the possession of a few owners, of whom I may mention Sir Richard O'Donnell, in the southern district of Ballycroy, Major M'Cormick, the Bishop of Killala, and the representatives of Sir James Shaen, namely, Messrs. Bingham and Carter, whose property was until very lately undivided; but latterly a division having taken place, it is hoped that an ascertained ownership will urge each of these bog lords to some greater exertion in the reclaiming of



their wastes. As it is, and as far as my limited observation extended, I could see very little improvement, very little reclamation of the bog waste, and could hear of nothing that was at all respectable in the way of husbandry, except the farm of Dean Lyons. This very reverend gentleman, the parish priest of Kilmore Erris, besides being an active clergyman, is, I was given to understand, a spirited agriculturist, and has commenced considerable improvement at a farm he has taken in the northern part of the Mullet, called Shanaghy. I understand as much as that this agricultural speculation of the parish priest was not approved of by Archbishop M'Hale, and that in Doctor Lyons' absence in Rome, his GRACE sent an inquisitorial commission into Erris to examine into the matter. How that ended I am not prepared to state; but I presume it did not end in extinguishing the parish priest's farming practices, for I understand he still devotes himself to husbandry. And really, under the circumstances, I do not see how he does wrong. I am as much aware, perhaps, as any one, how, under *common* circumstances, clergymen should abstain from avocations that would in any way withdraw them from their clerical functions; and how, with regard to Protestant parish ministers, scarcely *any* peculiarity of position would justify *their* engaging in the avocations of the AVARI AGRICOLÆ. But for a person in Dean Lyons' position, who can, and I suppose does employ a number of clerical coadjutors, whereby the sundry ordinances of his church are duly discharged—if this Dean should employ the leisure (which other priests occupy so largely

in promoting political agitation,) in exhibiting a good and practicable method of husbandry, easily imitated and within the reach of every landholder, I am quite sure he would be a benefactor to his country. Aware as I am of the great suspicion with which Protestant landed proprietors are looked upon by their Roman Catholic tenantry, and how much any improvement *they* may suggest is considered either impracticable or mischievous, and how constantly alterations are discarded as unfit for the poor man, though it may do for his honour the master, who has plenty of money *to lose* ; yet I conceive that, when they see their *own* priest, at his *own* risk, and for the *general* benefit, practically exhibiting the advantages of change of system, and that the old way is not the *good* way, incalculable benefits may be expected to result ; and though I am one of the last who would desire any clergyman to devote himself exclusively, or even largely, to worldly concerns, yet I can surely conceive such a *possibility* as that of a pastor, some Oberlin or Felix Neff, who, doing one thing, and yet not leaving others undone, is intent on promoting in such a backward district as this, both the temporal and spiritual welfare of his flock, and can exhibit improvements and invite others to follow example. I presume Dean Lyons has need of patience in this his SAMPLER work—patience not only to bear with the malicious insinuations of those who would cover their enmity to him, arising out of differences in church politics, with the cloak of objections to his farming proceedings ; but patience also in finding that he has hitherto been unsuccessful in inducing his

parishioners to adopt his new and palpably valuable improvements—improvements that are staring the people in the face, still they will not yet accept of them. I opine he often sits down under the disheartening conviction, that a priest's influence, great as it undoubtedly is, while it may be very effectual in pushing on the people to proceedings that chime in with their passions and their long cherished hopes, yet is comparatively powerless when brought to bear in breaking down dogged prejudices, and doing violence to almost inveterate habits; and no doubt many of the sturdy old Mulleeters have said to their *improving* priest,—“Your reverence, that wants us to stick to the *old* way in religion, why urge us to give up the *old* way of managing our land.” I have heard that some one recommended to this new-light pastor, that it might be well if, when imposing a penance, instead of sending a sinner to ATONE for his misdeeds to the reek of Croagh Patrick, or the holy well of Bala, he should send them to dig drains and execute other useful laborious works at his farm of Shanaghy. Whether his reverence took the advice or not I cannot tell, possibly he did *not*, on the conviction that said worthy deeds of penance would have been done as perfunctorily as that of the pilgrim who, when enjoined to march to Rome with peas in his shoes, took care to boil them before he set out.\*

\* Perhaps the pastor was aware that *penance* work would give as bad a return as I have known *justice* work to do; as will appear from the following anecdote:—Some years ago, in the good old times, when chancellors were not as strict in their observance of the magistracy as they now are, in a certain place in the province of Munster, a gentleman

Speaking of my own limited observation, I certainly did see some heavy crops of barley within the Mullet, and along the shores of Blacksod Bay, forced as these crops were by sea-weed manure ; but the fences were despicable, and, in general, the enclosed fields of potatoes and oats were overrun with weeds, which the population, though abundant and idle, did not think it worth while to eradicate. The mode of tenure in Erris presents an insuperable bar to improvement, and, as long as it is permitted to exist, the case is hopeless. The farms under the landlord are held in common, as respects both tillage and pasture. In the land appro-

who held the commission of the peace was summoned before the petty sessions by a steward he had discharged, for the amount of wages due. To this summons the master made appearance, and stated in defence that he withheld the wages because the steward neglected his business, and did not get his farming work duly and in good time done, to his very great injury. To this the steward's replication was—"Ah thin, your worships, how could I get on with the masther's business, when the labourers he sent into the work were all JUSTICE min?" "What do you mean, honest man (says the presiding magistrate), by *justice* men?" "Why, *plase* your worship, what I mane is, that when any of the people would come to get justice from the masther, his honour would say he was busy, and could not just thin attend to him; but he would say, 'Go, my honest fellow, into the hayfield, or the cornfield, or the bog, and take a turn of work with my people, and maybe towards evening I will be able to attind to what yez want.' In this way, yer worships, masther would send upon me a set of lazy, gossipping, gosthering fellows, who would not do my bidding, and would tell me to my face, seeing it was behind the masther's back, that they did not come to be made a handle of this a way. How thin, yer worships, with such *hands* could I get through *dacently* with the work? No, gentlemen, I'd rather hire with a master who had spalpeens at four-pence a day nor have to do with such jokers."

[I dare say Doctor Lyons knows well the Irish character.

priated to tillage, each head of a family casts lots every year for the number of ridges he is entitled to, and he is restrained from tilling those ridges in any other way, or under any other rotation than that of his neighbour. Moreover, the ridges change ownership every third year, a new division taking place. The head of the village, entitled the king, originally the *caunfiney*, makes the division as equal as possible, requiring each man to cast lots for his ridge,\* one in a good field, another in an inferior, and another in a worse. From this system, independent of the endless disputes and jealousies it must give rise to, it is evident there can be little or no progression,—for let a man show what individual industry he may, it is a mere chance whether he will enjoy the fruits of his industry off the ground he has laboured, for more than three years; hence a carelessness of futurity, hence a hopelessness of being better than his neighbours.

They use the same extraordinary kind of ridge in the cultivation of potatoes and corn which I described in my account of Achill, and the same kind of instrument called a gowl-gob, which consists of two small spades, about three inches broad, set on separate

\* “An amazing quantity of labour is also lost in this run-ridge system; for a man may have a ridge in each of four or five parts of a townland, probably a mile or two asunder, the manure for which must be brought from different points, or probably the same point with increased distance. Add to this the eternal trespass that must occur in passing through one another's lots, and it will be seen that the labour and loss of time that would be expended in this way must be more than twice what would be necessary for any compact farm.”—*Knight*, p. 59.

pieces of wood in the form of a fork, and joined in one handle. This odd looking tool does well in the sandy soil of the Mullet, and in loose bog soil, but for general work it must be superseded by the common spade. There are few ploughs in the district, and in spring a light harrow with wooden pins, more like a rake is used ; and still, as I am informed the harrow is drawn by fastening it to the horses' tails.

In ancient times, all through the west of Ireland, it was the practice to work both plough and harrow with horses drawing from their tails, and an act of parliament was passed in James the First's reign, forbidding the barbarian practice, under a heavy penalty. I am assured that it is still a part of the Erris husbandry, and that those who resort to it assert, that it is neither severe upon the horse, nor injurious to him.

In the mountain district outside the Mullet and away from the sea shore, the people living in villages through the glens, content with as much potatoes as their families want, and some corn to be used in illicit distillation, give their attention principally to the rearing and sale of cattle ; there are none more astute in driving a bargain ; and they are great hoarders of money.\* Like all people over the surface of the

\* “ The people, generally speaking, are far from being poor, with often greater marks than others of *outside* poverty,—an active, hardy, intelligent race of men, hospitable to an extreme, as far as they have means ; but, satisfied with little themselves, they seek not what others would call comforts, but which, to them, from habit, would be superfluous luxuries ; hence, in their houses, there is little of cleanliness, or apparent comfort in furniture, bedding, or the usual accompaniment of a certain sum of riches. The whole thought seems to be the rearing and tending of cattle, going to fairs,



earth, badly governed, and subject to the exacting will of their superiors, they exhibit outwardly a poverty which is far from real. Interested and prejudiced persons may assert that all this arises from recent oppression, and arising out of English rule and Protestant penal laws ; but the evil is older and much more deeply seated. The cosherings and the bonnaughts, the coyne and livery of their ancient Milesian lords, the inroads and the feuds of rival septs, gave rise to this general mistrust, and to this fear of appearing wealthy, long before England afforded its protection to, or, as some say, inflicted its injury on, the Irish community. Neither does the present distrust arise solely from fear of the landlords knowing how wealthy they are ; I am sure, also, that the appearance of poverty is simulated to blink the priest. Of course the clergyman, depending for subsistence on what is called voluntary contribution, leans heaviest on the reputed rich, and he must resort to expedients in dealing with his parishioner, and in a way which, in fact, is any thing but an appeal to free will, extract from the men of substance what is so much needed. In this way, I am quite sure, that the mode in which the Romish

and selling or exchanging. In 1813, I slept at a man's house who had one hundred head of black cattle and two hundred sheep, and there was not a single chair or stool in his house but one three-legged one,—no bed but rushes,—no vessel for boiling their meals but one, nor any for drinking milk out of but one, (the *Madder*,) which was handed round indiscriminately to all who sat round the potato-basket (myself among the rest) placed upon the pot for a table ; yet this man was said to be very rich besides the stock named above."—*Knight*, p. 104.

clergy get their living has been productive of meanness and craft, and what are called pious frauds on the part of the spiritual man, and of commensurate and antagonist cunning, evasion, and falsehood on the part of the laity.

I can suppose a Roman Catholic clergyman sent by his bishop into such a district as Erris, and he, to be sure, is not the most learned or most gentlemanlike, or most likely to work the cause of the church who is so sent; here the great land-owners are Protestants; there are few independent middle-men, and the population consists of villagers living along the sea shore and in the adjoining valleys on the husbandry I have just described; or of villagers in the mountain glens, whose occupation is herding, and whose substance lies in their cattle. The priest feels that he must be decent, if he would uphold his church; he also feels he must be pliable, if he would support himself; and if he pleases to live, must live to please; aware that he dare not run counter to existing prejudices, or attempt to offend long retained habits, he must humour those he dare not counteract. Moreover, he must exercise cunning and plausibility; must detect him who assumes unreal poverty; and while forced to lean heavy on such a one, in order to extract money or money's worth, he must do it so as to flatter the weakness he dare not expose, and make the man rest happy in his prejudices.

In this way I can well suppose how a priest is often obliged against his better sense to speak disparagingly of improvements. As, for instance, it may be supposed that if a savings' bank or loan fund were

established in the vicinity, and perhaps one of the wealthiest men in the parish,—one who gives most dues, sends in most duty oats, gives the best station dinner (for the stingiest of men often give the largest feasts :)—well, this man perhaps has made his wealth by lending money to his neighbours, on the large usurious interest which is frequently exacted in the country parts of Ireland,\* and of course his object is, to decry both the savings' bank and the loan fund ; and the priest gives Paddy Bawn a call, and the conversation runs on the new-fangled invention introduced by the landlord or the parson—and Pat would make it appear that it is all a humbug—all a scheme to get the people's money into *their* hands. Why, what can the priest say? He dare not offend the pocket prejudices of his strong parishioner. No ; he must join in the outcry, and so his reverence is committed against what he knows in his heart to be useful. In the same way the *voluntary* support of the priest some years ago operated in keeping up illicit distillation. How dare the priest inveigh against that by which his own dues were affected—how could he desire to put down that which contributed

\* I believe that loan funds are now very generally established throughout Ireland, and am convinced they are to a great extent useful ; but they certainly are liable to great abuses, and if not wisely administered may do much harm. In no instance should an interest be charged beyond what will pay the expenses of the establishment ; in no instance should the profits, if any, be applied to what is called a charitable purpose—this would be making the needy help the needy. If there be any profits, I assert that they ought to be applied towards reducing the interest charged on the respective loans.

to the growth of oats and barley in his parish—how dare he denounce that which brought so much ready cash into the pockets of his flock. In this way the clergy were obliged to connive at smuggling and illicit distillation, and even constrained to allow their own chapels to be turned into malt houses—nay, more than that, into actual distilleries; and I was assured by one who detected a still at work in a chapel and close by the sanctuary—the water for the cooling of the worm being brought in under the very altar window, that he felt sure that if the priest was cognizant of it he *dared* not hinder it; and, as my informant was, according to the letter of his instructions, required to level to the ground every house in which a still was found at work, he was placed in this instance in a rare dilemma; the house in question was both a chapel and a distillery, to leave it standing would be contrary to the fiscal statute—to level it would be sacrilege.

In this difficulty he thought it best to take the opinion of his superiors, and wrote accordingly, but never received any instructions; in this case he thought it wise, as no doubt it was agreeable to his own wishes, to consider it a religious (as it was in every sense of the word a *spiritual*) edifice, and so it stands to this day; and now that Father Mathew has put St. Patrick out of countenance, of course never again will such doings go on under its consecrated roof.

I mention this as one instance amongst many in which the present mode of supporting the priests, operates in retarding the improvement of the people.

I would show that it acts in circumstances not at all connected with the education or religion of the country, and induces the clergyman to resort to meanesses and subterfuges that, under a more independent state of livelihood, he would scorn. I shall adduce an instance connected with the entertainments which priests expect to receive when they hold a station at the house of a parishioner. Now, these *feeds* may be considered as part of the priest's emoluments, and, though often weighing heavy on the purse of the entertainer, it would be scarcely fair to expect the clergy to forego them, unless some equivalent were found for the loss of so many substantial dinners.

On a certain day somewhat later than a century ago, Huey Gallagher, the priest's clerk of the chapel of C——, gave out after mass to the congregation, that he had somewhat of consequence to acquaint them with—to which they would do well to take heed. This solemn preliminary of course caught attention, and some great announcement was expected—nothing short of the pope's death, or the arrival in those quarters of Father Mathew. When with loud voice Huey sung out, "Good people all, I warn ye not to kill any geese during the stations to be held during the following week; for all the *geese are dying at Ballina of the cholera morbus!!!*" This *ruse* was too transparent, and the consequence was, that all the people burst out into a roar of laughter at Huey's bulletin, in which the priest very good humouredly joined. Was it not the case that his reverence was tired of geese, with which he was crammed ever since Michaelmas, (so that, satiated with such fowl

feeding, he in sad wit asserted that he expected pen-feathers would shortly start from his skin,) and that mutton just now was in prime order? At all events the proclamation of the priest's *double* had not the designed effect; for Mrs. Monaghan having the following Saturday the *honour* of giving a station dinner, had two geese killed for the occasion.\*

And certainly, with respect to education, I do think that the Roman Catholic clergy of such a district as Erris would be acting, under the existing

\* The effects of the mode in which the Roman Catholic clergy get their incomes are not confined to Erris. There are other places where, when the budget is opened, extraordinary "ways and means" come to light. As, for instance, take the following circumstance, which I have reason to say may be considered as a FACT. During the prevailing epidemic which has caused so much sickness and death amongst cattle in every part of Ireland, a priest in the county of Cavan, of whose name and parish I am in possession, whose regular means are not ample, who has sundry sisters to support, and who is *not* a teetotaller, gave out that he could supply the farmers, *for a consideration*, with blessed salt, that would effectually protect cattle from the disease; or, if infected, would infallibly cure them. Accordingly, he was resorted to by thousands, and he with great readiness supplied them with packages of salt at 2s. 6d. each, with this restrictive power, that no one must presume to give any of what they got away, for that it was only useful to *their own* cattle. The reason of this injunction is obvious. My informant assures me that he has seen hundreds per day going to purchase the sacred salt; and moreover, that his own parish priest, a VERY REVEREND having a cow that took the distemper, sent for the cure and applied it, but not with success, for the cow died; but this untoward event was accounted for by the holy salt not being applied in time. Was this encouragement by the VERY reverend, of the sacred salt-seller a matter of faith or policy? It is at all events considered that this consecrated remedy has brought some hundreds of pounds into the Cavan priest's pocket.



voluntary system, against their own pecuniary interests in promoting education—therefore, I cannot expect it to advance. If the acquisition of the power to read and write be of any value, it is to acquire and circulate knowledge ; and, if knowledge expands the mind and gives it a desire for independence and self-respect ; and, if *these* are opposed to the dictation of others, and to a submissive leaning on their understanding, then a church and priesthood which calls for acquiescence of the will and the surrender of private judgment, must be opposed to such knowledge ; and if, moreover, such knowledge be very apt to question the validity of claims that cannot, except in darkness, be supported—if dues drawn from holy clay, blessed candles, blessing fishing grounds and saying masses to protect cattle from murrain and the evil eye, are likely to be refused by those who well know that even the Church of Rome dare not openly authorize such things, I am quite sure that priests, paid as they are now, must look jealously on education ; and, if they cannot altogether put a stop to it, they must insist on being its sole directors.

With regard to Erris, *this* I think I have ascertained—that education, so far from advancing, is retrograding. The schools that were established under the old societies—the Hibernian School and Kildare Place Institutions—are knocked up ; and others are either not substituted, or if substituted, they are of the most nugatory character. As a proof of this, Erris is the only place in Ireland where the Irish language is increasing and the English decreasing ; to substantiate this fact I would adduce the following

assertion, which I take from the letter of an intelligent correspondent : “ Fifteen years ago, if a stranger wanted information he was sure to get an answer in English from the children, while the adults and old folk alone could speak Irish : now the adults only speak English (what they learned as children), and the children can speak no English.”

Respecting the population of Erris, I am given to understand that it is not so great as the returns to parliament would make it. The Roman Catholic clergy all through Ireland have a strong desire to exaggerate the numbers of their own persuasion ; of course the same object is not lost sight of here : accordingly Dean Lyons, in a speech reported as spoken by him at Ballina on the subject of the Poor Law, makes the following assertion :—“ The Poor Law Commissioners would make the population of Erris to be not twelve thousand, but it is nearly double that number, there being by the last census in Kilmore and Kilcommon twenty thousand one hundred and sixty, and upwards of three thousand in Ballycroy.” Here certainly is a trifling difference, which the following anecdote, furnished by my intelligent friend, may account for.

“ During the famine of 1831, four tons of oatmeal were sent to me by the inspector-general to be distributed amongst the people, and to insure an equal division, and if possible avoid the ill-natured disputes that were spread to the prejudice of all distributors, not excluding the *clergy*, I adopted the following plan : I called the heads of the respective villages before me, and in their presence and that of all around, I desired

every applicant (and but *two* in the whole parish did not apply) to state the number of his family, at the same time requesting the heads of the applicant's village to correct any misstatement—a duty which they appeared to me to perform honestly and conscientiously—and the consequence was, I got so correct a census of the parish, that the priest requested a copy of it, and asserted it was the only correct one ever taken. Shortly after this event, an official from Belmullet, a man named C——, came to take (I suspect) the census alluded to by Mr. Lyons, and in doing so, called at my house to obtain a list of its inmates. On hearing he was at the door I ordered the servant to ask him in, and offered him refreshment, which he accepted of, and after he had taken the raw edge off his appetite, apparently to his great relief, I asked him the number of inhabitants in the surrounding villages, according to his account, merely to see whether his enumeration agreed with that I had previously made. To my great astonishment I found that we disagreed in an extraordinary way—for it was all one way. For instance, Ross contained by my account, 286 ; Stonefield, 297 ; Cariatyge, 122 ; Portacloy, 83 ; Gatahill, 18 ; while the same villages taken in the same order by Mr. C——'s account contained, 330 ; 347 ; 170 ; 113 ; 21. Puzzled to account for this disagreement, it at last popped into my head to ask the gentleman how he was paid for the trouble he took, when, after some little hesitation he informed me he was paid by the HUNDRED.

“Oh, that accounts for our not agreeing,” said I, *dryly*, and the official went his way. It is possible

that the same plan was adopted all over the barony ; and it is natural to suppose the effect was the same. Now, allowing Mr. Lyons to be correct, that by the last census there were 20,160 souls in the parishes of Kilmore and Kilcommon, and bearing in mind that the persons whom the census in my neighbourhood contrived to return were the inhabitants of five villages, or 981 instead of 806. With the assistance of the golden rule we may venture to reduce 20,160 to 16,563, at least. Perhaps a general reduction of one-fifth would adjust to its right enumeration the census of that year. While on the subject, I beg to observe that the number of persons to each smoke or hearth, is not so great as one would at first imagine, in passing through a mountain village. On the occasion just alluded to, I found each family to average  $5\frac{50}{639}$ .

The manners of this secluded people are those of a naturally very amiable, generous, and confiding race. Of course, with all the ill-regulated passions belonging to an uncontrolled childhood and uneducated youth. Still, there does not appear to be that bloodthirsty pugnacity that characterizes the Munster Irish ; and from what I have heard, deeds of violence and bloody feuds do not much prevail. Formerly, from the facilities of smuggling, and from the difficulty of access to the district, the people were liable to the contamination of associating with profligate seamen, and notorious outlaws, who had fled hither for protection. But it appears to me that this contamination rather affected the better classes of inhabitants, who, speaking the English language,

were the descendants of the Protestant colony settled here by Sir Arthur Shaen. *They* were, indeed, blighted and wasted away under such influences—but, protected by their poverty, ignorance, and vernacular language, and secluded in the mountain-glens, the old Irish were *below* the foreigners' mark. And here still, as in Achill, are to be found manners, habits, and superstitions almost the same as what prevailed one thousand years ago; as, for instance, the custom of making horses draw by the tail, which certainly is not only ancient but economical, for it saves all manner of tackle, except the hair of the animal. The following is a copy of a letter from a resident in Erris, who has for many successive years witnessed the practice:—

“In justice to those who continue the practice of *harrowing by the tail*, I beg to observe, that as far as *cruelty* is concerned, I really can see no objection to it; for if it gave the animals any pain, I do not think they would submit to it so quietly as they do; indeed, there are people who assert it to be the most *humane* way of doing the work—in proof of which, I need only relate the following anecdote:—I was on my way to dine with a worthy old gentleman who resided here on my first arrival, (now seventeen years ago,) when I first observed the practice, and, as was natural for a *foreigner*, could not find words sufficiently strong to express my feelings at the cruelty of the thing. ‘I beg your pardon, (said my host,) you are quite mistaken; for I assert, and I feel assured I will force you to agree with me in opinion, that it is the most humane way of working the

beast ; for this reason, that he harrows with less exertion.' 'Impossible,' replied I. 'I will prove it to a sailor with ease (answered the gentleman). Pray, when you anchor your ships, why do you give them a long scope of cable when it blows hard?' 'Because,' said I, 'the hold the anchor has of the ground is in an increased ratio to the sine of the angle the cable makes with the ground.' 'Not being an orangeman *all out*, (replied the old gentleman laughing,) I know nothing about your *signs*, though I believe I understand what you mean. Now if you give a long scope of cable to increase the resistance, pray does it not stand to reason that a short scope must have a contrary effect? and, therefore, must not harrowing by the tail be easier to the animal, inasmuch as the harrow rope is shortened by the whole length of the horse?' My host chuckled with delight, and seemed to consider this argument a *floorer* ; and *my* 'But, my dear sir, there is a vast difference between securing a cable to the "*bits*," and making it fast to the rudder pintles,' neither diminished his glee, nor induced him to change his opinion. He continued the practice to the day of his death, and up to the last year (1839) it *was*, and next year I feel assured it *will be* followed. It is hard to break a custom attended with no expense."

The materia medica of Erris is pretty much of the same simple and efficacious character as that of Achill, a notice of which will be found in my former volume. My valuable correspondent thus alludes to it :—"In your Tour in Connaught, I observe mention is made of a metallic bolus ; I have heard of it as



practised here, and believe it is administered here in the complaint vulgarly called 'a turn in the gut.' Our practice here, however, differs, as on such occasions, we take the patient by the heels, and shake him head downwards, till the internal machinery is adjusted to its proper place. I have seen sailors adjust occasionally their watches on the same sound principle.—*N. B.* Shortly after writing the above, I entered into conversation with a countryman, who told me that the bullet is in greater repute than I was aware of; by his account it is a good and common cure for the cholic, of which by the way, his father died after a dose of the musket ball. Query, did he die of the cholic or the bolus?"

But in speaking of the manners and morals of such a people as this, of course we must allude to their superstitions as materially affecting their conduct, and that conduct as regulated with respect to their greatest temptation—the desire for intoxicating liquors; and now supposing for an instant, that the Mathewite pledge will operate effectually and permanently on both priest and people, I may narrate the following as a by-gone transaction, the like of which *cannot* possibly occur again. Making use still of my valuable correspondent, I give his own words—he heads his anecdote CHEATING THE DEVIL.

"Judging from the periodicals that occasionally fall in my way, I conclude that the oaths of a certain class of my fellow subjects are not considered, as at present, particularly binding. I am, however, of a different opinion, and provided due care be taken to avoid kissing of thumbs, together with a few other

manceuvres of the same description ; and provided also that the will accompanies the deed, and the oath is carefully worded, so as to leave no loop-hole to escape, I know no people's oath I would sooner depend on.

“My reason for forming this opinion, though I fear that opinion will not be much valued on account of the drawbacks attending it, is, that *I consider people must respect that which they take such pains to avoid*, and that they do exert the greatest ingenuity to evade an oath hastily taken, when labouring under sore bones and broken heads, the effects of some drunken broil, and repented of immediately after. All this, I think the following anecdotes will abundantly prove. I have always been on friendly terms with the Roman Catholic clergy,—formerly much more so than at present ; for I shrewdly suspect that a decree has gone forth from certain high quarters at Tuam, that the *clergy* are not to be over-intimate with non-Catholics. Be this as it may, many a pleasant evening have I spent with priests in my own house ; and I will do them the justice to say, that I have in general found them hearty, benevolent, and affectionate men, who loved society, and could innocently amuse and be amused in it. As an instance of the kindly feeling that heretofore existed towards me, and which feeling I cannot charge myself in being backward to respond to, by way of digression I must narrate the *reason* of the only masculine kiss I have ever *enjoyed* since the day on which my beard commenced to appear.

“Some years ago, I had been on the Continent for

a few months; on my return home, the happy news ran riot through the hills, and reached the ears of my good friend Father P——, who, without delay, pulled on his boots, called out his mare, rode on with the promptitude of a warm heart, until he reached my door, flung himself off, and, taking me in his ample arms, brought a pair of strong beards into collision, and so inflicted upon me the rasp of as rough and warm a kiss as could be given in good will.

“But to return to my subject.—On one of my friendly SOGGARTH’s unexpected but welcome visits, I observed such marks of displeasure clouding the usually bland countenance of my spiritual friend, that I took the liberty of asking what it was that chafed him, and without hesitation he replied, ‘That he had been made very angry that morning, and had not yet recovered his equanimity, in consequence of a woman having the impertinence of scolding him, for being the cause of her husband’s getting beastly drunk; and the worst of the matter is, that the woman was not all out in the wrong, though nothing can excuse her impertinence in speaking thus to ME! for I do acknowledge that I have been shamefully taken in by her scoundrel of a husband, and the innocent means of his becoming drunk.’

“He explained, as well as his indignation would allow, the circumstances of the case as follows.—It appeared that a few days before, the priest had called at his parishioner’s house to rest himself after a long tramp across the boggy hills, and to refresh himself with a few whiffs of his *dudeen* (a short pipe). To effect these two genial objects, his reverence had seated

himself within the hob on a *creepy* (a little low stool). After chatting with the man of the house for a few minutes—the wife being out of doors—the former said, casting at the same time his eyes on a little keg that lay beneath the bed, as if quite carelessly, ‘Ah thin, for the life of me, Father Ned, I can’t make out what foreign wood that vessel is made of; it’s even too weighty for oak, it’s mighty stout entirely;’ and while saying this, he had taken it in his hands, and appeared to be balancing and weighing it most accurately. The action of the man made the priest disposed to enter into a similar calculation; so, taking the vessel out of the man’s hands, he, after due consideration, said, ‘Why shouldn’t it be heavy?—*it’s full.*’—‘Troth, and yer reverence so it is.’ ‘Well then,’ exclaimed the priest, ‘where’s the great curiosity? it doesn’t appear to me heavier than a full keg ought to be.’—‘Don’t it?’ says the man; ‘then all I have to say, Father Ned, is, that it seems mighty heavy to me.’ So coolly taking it out of the priest’s hands, he quietly deposited it in its former place under the bed; and his reverence was scarcely gone when he commenced his attack on its contents, and never quitted it day after day until the heavy concern was as light and as dry as a drum. Now, the fellow *was a conscientious affidavit man, and had sworn to drink nothing STRONG but what the priest would give him.*

“In the second case I have to relate, I am sorry to say *I* played second fiddle. One evening, a rather decent man with whom I had some dealings, came to my house; he looked cold and weary, and, as he had

often turned up a hare for me, I considered myself bound to follow the custom of the country, and ask him to take a glass of whiskey. 'Troth, and it's but a *frind* would ax me to do the like,' said Phil More; 'and it's a hundred pities, so it is, that I dare not touch a dhrop as big as would rest on my thumb nail.' 'Why not, Phil?' said I; 'you used to be a good warrant at throwing up your little finger.' So Big Phil explained: his last booze was followed by a scrimmage, *that* was followed by a process, and *that* by expense, and nearly a committal to jail, and *that* by repentance, and *that* by being an affidavit man for a year and a day. 'What,' said I, quite alive to the customs of my neighbours, 'did you leave no gap open? Could you not run under your engagement and take one eggshell full?' 'Och, then, it's I that did *that same*,' cried Phil, tipping me a very knowing look. 'And I *could* take a good dhrink now, if your honour would not be offended at my axing a favour?' 'No offence in life, Phil, so out with it.' 'Well, then, if you would but just sell me something, I can drink away till the cows are driven out in the morning.' 'Well, what will you buy?' Phil eyed my small assortment for some time, and having at length settled on one thing that tickled his fancy, he said, 'Maybe, then, yer honour would be after selling me yonder swoord' (pointing to an old uniform one that hung against the wall). 'Indeed, and I will,' said I, 'provided you sell it back again to me in the morning, at the same price you now pay for it.' 'Och, then, it's I that will do that with all the veins in my heart,' answered Philip, rubbing his hands

with rapture at my unexpected condescension, and thereby the chance of getting a skinful. The sword was accordingly purchased for sixpence ; and, as he was now at liberty to drink elsewhere as well as at my house, Philip before midnight was in admirable condition for another *scrimmage*, so that I resolved not to wait for the repurchase of my warlike implement ; but, for fear of leaving it in the hands of a now ferocious beast, I had him disarmed before he left the village. *Philip More was another affidavit man !!!*"

But, perhaps, the manners and habits of a people may be as well known by their views and conduct in regard to the inferior animals, as affected by the superstitions which evidently seem handed down from remote antiquity, and which religious instruction has not yet been able to eradicate. To this effect my correspondent thus writes :—"During this month (Jan. 7, 1840) a circumstance has occurred in this immediate vicinity, which shows in a strong and revolting light the superstitions of these mountaineers. Mary P. who used lately to teach a few children in the village, happened to pass a boy, named Patrick C—e, who was digging lustily in the potato-garden behind his cabin, and she said, 'Troth you're a *clane* boy, and will soon be a bettther man nor your father ;' but she forgot to say, 'and God bless you,'—an indispensable addition to every remark in the way of praise, whether made on animal or vegetable. As, for instance, when you see a grunter wallowing in the mire, you may not only say, 'That's an iligant slip of a pig,' but you *must* add, 'and God bless it.' The poor schoolmistress had not long passed



the boy until he was seized with a pain between his shoulders, which was followed by fits—occasioned, as I consider, from having overworked himself, to which, perhaps, he was instigated by the woman's praise ; but no other reason would be assigned by his family for his illness than that he was suffering under an evil eye, and the schoolmistress was accused of being the owner of it. She was accordingly sent for (for her time of teaching in the village having expired, she had left the immediate neighbourhood). On her arrival she was required to clear her character, and undo the mischief she had occasioned, by the following charm. She was to spit three times on the boy, and accompany each expectation by a 'God bless you.' This was certainly done, but my informant told me the boy derived no relief whatever, which some of the knowing ones asserted arose from the schoolmistress *having spat on the blanket and not on the boy.*

"About a month after, on passing by the village, and inquiring for the boy, I heard that he was fast recovering, and this was attributed to the following charm, which his friends had procured from some person residing near Downpatrick Head, in Tyrawly. Two black hens were taken to a mearing, or property boundary, where one of them was killed, and the other let loose, (by the way, did the scape-goat of the Hebrews give the hint ?) the killed bird was then boiled, feathers, entrails and all, and young C—e *had done his best, according to directions, to devour all, together with the soup ;* and then the devil had left him ; and, to tell the truth, I am not much

surprised he did so, for a chieftain of Tyrconnell could alone have stood such a mess.

“This charm almost beats in nastiness one in repute for curing the jaundice, which is, to eat nine dozen—neither more nor less—what shall I call them?—*head animals*!! I really cannot say whether they should be cocks or hens. Fitzgerald, my informant as to the cure of the boy C—e, said that he had assisted in catching one of the hens. There was, I suspect, something else done, such as the use of an inverted pater-noster, but that was kept a secret from us.”

I must relate another anecdote, relative to elf-shot cattle :—“Jan. 14th, 1840.—A horse, belonging to Paddy B—t, of Kilgalligan, fell under its load, on the strand, near my house, and lay for some time as dead. Thinking the animal was in a very bad state, I went down to examine the poor brute, when it suddenly turned its legs upwards, and commenced kicking violently, as in the greatest agony. On inquiry I was informed by the boy who was with it, that he had been drawing potatoes, and that the beast had taken a bellyfull, apparently the first it had taken for some time, for it appeared in a complete state of starvation; I therefore concluded, that unusual repletion, of a very fermenting vegetable, had filled the creature full of air, and that he was troubled with the windy cholic. Hoping that the animal would recover, I left it, and shortly afterwards a person came running up to inform me that Biddy Garvin had found a cure for the beast, and smiling as he said it, ‘Troth, sir, the cure’s a quare one.’ This observation led me to make further inquiry, and

I found that old Biddy had, with much solemnity, spit three times on the animal's neck, then whisked the tail of her gown three times over the part spitten on, and had wound up all by mumbling something to herself, which my informant had not been able to hear.

"From the conduct of the old woman I conclude she supposed that the animal was elf-shot; and this circumstance recalls to my memory one that took place some years ago, when I resided at Portnacloy. A cow that I had lately purchased was suddenly taken ill—an event which created no little bustle in my cottage, but which I did not add to, being quite ignorant of the treatment of beasts. The cow in question was the first animal—'*barring*' (as we say here) a pet monkey, a dog, or such like, I could ever call my own. At length the calm that ensued assured me poor 'Crummy' was out of danger, and feeling a weight off my mind, or rather off my purse, by being assured I should not be defrauded of Crummy's assistance in keeping a weight on the stomachs of my domestics, I dropped my book and went out to enjoy a snuff of fresh air, in doing which I encountered an old weaver, named Redmond M'Gragh, who had evidently placed himself at my door to attract my attention, and who eyed me with a look of consequence that seemed to say, 'Faix, Kipten, you're under a mighty grate obligation to me!' Not being aware of the important part he had lately acted, I entered into conversation with him on some subject he felt no interest in, but which he politely bore till he saw I was on the point of

parting, when, observing no demonstration on my part indicative of a display of my purse, he sagaciously threw out the following gentle refresher :— ‘ Niver had more throuble to cure a baste in my life, plase yer honour.’ ‘ What !’ said I, ‘ are you a cow doctor, Redmond ? I thought you were a weaver.’ ‘ A bit of both, Kipten dear ! and hearing yer honour’s cow was sick, I just ran over to relave her ; and faix it was lucky I did so, for the poor baste was badly shot.’ ‘ Shot !’ said I, in the greatest surprise. ‘ Shot !’ repeated Redmond, in a tone so mysterious, that I involuntarily looked over my shoulder, in expectation of a similar compliment ; but, observing the coast clear, I roughly said to the little, dirty, old man before me : ‘ Shot !—who on earth shot her, I say ?’ Redmond gradually rose on his tiptoes, apparently from a dread of being overheard, and significantly replied in a whisper, though not a creature was near us : ‘ “ The gentry,” Kipten dear ! and troth they nearly finished the poor baste, for here’s where the shot went in’—at the same time placing my finger on a spot about the short ribs, where I really did feel something like a little hollow. I was not then, neither am I now, very well acquainted with the hollows and bumps that ought to be on a cow’s carcass, but not being exactly convinced the animal had been made a target of, I examined the opposite side and there found, as I expected would be the case, a corresponding hollow : ‘ Why, how is this, Mr. M’Gragh ?’ said I, with a mischievous smile on my countenance ; ‘ Crummy has been engaged on both sides, for here is another shot-hole on

this side.' 'Troth and so there is, as I'm a sinner,' replied the old man, a little confounded at the discovery, but his wit or simplicity instantly relieved him, and he added with the greatest confidence :— 'Och wurra!!! the shot came *out* here.'—A man convinced against his will, is of the same opinion still, 'tis said, so I made no further attempt to disabuse him of his folly, but inquired of my servants what steps he had taken to effect the cure, and on hearing that the cow had been measured from head to tail—that her girth had been taken—that she had been mumbled over—that she had been spit on, and marked with the cross—and that finally a drink had been given her of certain herbs, in which *three-half-pence* had been boiled, I sharply ordered the old goose or rogue—for I really knew not which to call him exactly—to make the best use of his legs; and informed him, if ever I caught him playing similar tricks at my house, I would order the servants to scald him. The cow doctor consequently beat his retreat with evident marks of mortification and disappointment, protesting, as he made his exit, 'that nothing but his drink of *three halfpence* had saved the baste's life, and sorra fut he would come to her again if "THE GENTRY" made a sieve of her carcass.'

"The following day, as ill-luck would have it, the cow was taken ill again, and many significant looks were exchanged by my domestics, which did not seem to promise much milk or butter to the establishment. I was, however, determined to have no more dealings with the *black art* under my roof; so, in lieu of Doctor M'Gragh's *never-before-doubted*

charm, a pound of Glauber salts was given, and I am happy to say with such good effect, that she was not only left in peace and quietness by the mischievous 'GENTRY,' but they have never since taken a fancy to *riddle* a beast of mine."

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In giving instances in this chapter of what I deem to be the evils of the voluntary system, as affecting the relations of the Roman Catholic clergy with their flocks, I wish it to be understood, that I have no intention of proposing as a remedy, an established provision. A casual observer may notice a disease, without assuming the professional skill to direct a remedy.



## CHAPTER XIV.

Dealings of Errisians with the inferior animals—Making court to foxes and care for their comforts—How Reynard is made a gossip—An emigrating fox—Gets its passage to a foreign land *gratis*—Cats, their parliament—Their ways and means—Can raise the wind better than the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but like him abused for what they are about—And placed in jeopardy—Anecdote of Catty Kane, her cat, and her courtier—Advice to spinsters in general to take a lesson from Catty Kane—Building castles *for* the air—Use of asses various—An Erris trial—The cause, the plaintiff and defendant—Consequences of kissing—A cure—A death—And a judgment—Seals—Enchanted men—A young one would make a man of the Mullet his mother—Treated like the hare with many friends—Owen Gallagher's adventure—His arrival at the magic land—Meets one he had injured—One enchantment neutralizes the other—The seal's advice and Owen's escape—Superstitions not confined to Erris or Ireland—How the cholera was kept from coming by an Errisman—Use of keeping one's hair—Cleanliness—Sea bathing—Observation respecting the improvement of Erris—Village and rundale system—Payments of rent in produce not in money—Nature of Erris bogs—Their capabilities—Instance of attempting to improve an incapable district—What are waste lands?—Difficulties of Connaught landlords, and excuses for them.

I HAVE said that the habits and character of a people may be in a great measure known from their opinions about, and treatment of, the inferior animals. I have in another portion of the book stated how highly they appreciate the intellect of foxes, how they consider that they can perfectly understand language, how they can be propitiated by kindness, and even moved by flattery, and that they do not only make mittens for Reynard's feet to keep him warm in the winter, which when made, they deposit

carefully near their holes, but they make them sponsors for their children, supposing that under the close and long established relationship of *gossipred*, they will be induced on all these occasions to befriend instead of doing them harm. In corroboration of these facts, I give the following extract from my friend's diary.

“Oct. 15th, 1840.—On visiting Portnacloy this day, I happened to mention in the watch-house that I had heard that the foxes occasionally received presents of mittens, and were nominated as sponsors to their children, in order that they might be coaxed to let their lambs alone. P. D—, a Roman Catholic, immediately assented that these statements were correct, and related the following instance: ‘On the coast-guards’ first coming into the country, old Dogherty the herd, who then lived at Portnacloy, was some time after appointed as Mr. Bourne’s herd; his flock sustained great loss through the voracity of the foxes, and one year, having lost nearly twenty lambs, he went to the fox’s den, with about a pound of good wool, which he threw in, and thus addressed him in Irish:—‘Fox agra, let’s be good friends, and do, avick, let my lambs alone. Here’s some wool to make mittens for your young ones, and I will be their gossip, and will ever and always be a good neighbour to you.’ The fox, it would appear, accepted Tom’s offering of friendship and fosterhood; for by his account to his friend, the coast-guard-man, from that day forth, he never lost a lamb.”

This testimony as to the intelligence of foxes is corroborated by the statement of another friend, who

thus accounts for the admission of foxes into Inniskea, an island so many leagues off shore, that no fox could possibly swim there. "Paddy O'Donnell and Darby Barrett, the former a native of Inniskea, the other a mainlander, were sitting on a sand-hill in the Mullet, with the said island just in sight of them; 'I wish,' says Paddy 'I had a ferret or two, for the rabbits are getting a head of us entirely on our island; they this year almost ruined my little bit of barley, bad 'cess to them. If we cannot be quit of them in any other way, I wish the foxes would come and rid us of them, or keep them at any rate, close to the sand hills.' 'Maybe,' says Darby, 'you'd be by-and-by after wishing the fox back again, for I'm thinking he'd be looking after your lambs as well as the rabbits.' This conversation ended, they separated, one seeking his corragh in order to return to the island, the other betaking himself to his village. Now Paddy had not got fifty yards along his path, when what should he see but a fox lying stiff, to all appearance dead,—a vixen, too, and full of cubs. 'Well,' says Pat, 'talk of the devil, and he'll appear; at any rate it's an ill wind that blows nobody good; the outside of the crathur is the very thing I want; the skin of its head and face will make a purty cap for little Pethereen, and that of its body will make a mighty good buoy for the herring nets.' So, taking up the animal by its brush, he flung it into the bottom of his boat, and in a few hours was ashore on his island; and so it was when seizing the fox by the leg, and pitching it on the island strand, to his utter astonishment, up bounced Reynard, and made off through the sand

hills of his new hunting ground." What other inference can be drawn from this *true* story, but that the vixen was listening to the two friends' conversation, that she perfectly comprehended the whole matter, and thought it a good though hazardous speculation to migrate to where the vulpine population did not press on the means of subsistence?

The observation of my MULLET friend on this fact, is as follows:—"Foxes are generally reputed great and ingenious rogues; but I believe to Erris is confined the conviction that the foxes themselves are aware of their bad character, and that they not only deserve, but are liable to be hanged for their larcenies and burglaries. It is on this admission of the foxes that the people act when they tie a small hempen string round the necks of their lambs, and Reynard never touches any so provided, his presentiment of his probable and deserved fate rendering him very cautious how he has any thing to do with a hempen cord."

So much at present for foxes. Cats are treated, as I opine, worse; for they are supposed to be but too often connected with witchcraft, and to lend their outward forms to familiar spirits. The timorous respect the people have for them is increased by the FACT of their frequent and numerous meetings, to which they come, from a distance of seven or eight miles, and from fifty to sixty are often in the assembly. The parliament place is generally on these occasions under a haystack, and as, like another great house of congress, their deliberations are in the night, their *discoorse* is as loud as it is vehement,

what they debate about is not exactly ascertained, matters no doubt of grave import to the feline polity,—war and commerce, ways and means, the falling off of followers—the increase of rats—the shortening of tails, much arguing at any rate about raising the wind, for Erris cats are known to have the power of creating a storm, or causing a calm, and this supposition seems to have arisen from the fact of cats being observed scratching the leg of a stool or table, or any upright thing within their reach, previous to a gale of wind, looking most knowingly, and consciously the whole time, and frequently accompanying their exercise with most melancholy mews. The storm which succeeds is supposed to be the effect of this feline proceeding, which is looked on as an incantation, insomuch that the moment a cat is observed to commence this scratching, it is immediately struck at with a stick, or tongs, or any other weapon within reach ; it is moreover assaulted with a clap of curses peculiarly appropriate (and the Irish is a magnificent cursing language) to cats under these circumstances. As soon as the storm begins to rise, all the available cats are seized, and placed under a metal pot, and there held in durance vile, until they resort to the exercise of their power in causing a calm. Now, not only is this power universally allowed, but what is of incalculable importance, this power is often taken advantage of by the cat's owner. The following story will evince that the feline theory is wrought out into practice, and the practitioner must have her full credit for her ready wit, and good luck to her with it, though the priest might not say it was very catholic work.

Not very long ago, a vessel was detained for some time in Blacksod Bay ; during the time of the delay, the skipper became intimate with and engaged the affections of a girl named Catty Kane. But when his vessel was ready for sea, the roving blade, with all a sailor's inconstancy, hoisted his sails, without at the same time hoisting a signal for the priest ; and out he put to sea, never intending to see the fair one more. But Catty knew a trick worth two of that, and had recourse to her cat. And now the brig is put into all her trim to clear the bay, but in vain ; the wind blows a hurricane in her teeth, and back she *must* come to her old anchorage. From this time forth, day after day, the captain used all possible skill to get out of harbour, but as often as he weighs anchor he is driven back again, and Catty understands the management of her cat so well, that the brig *must* just come in for shelter close to the poor girl's residence. This continued for many months,—the cargo is spoiling,—what is he to do ? Why, as the captain finds it impossible to quit Catty, he must needs marry her ; and so, taking her and her cat on board, and doing all decently and tightly, next day with a fair wind and flowing sheet, he can and does bid adieu to Erris!! What a pity it is that the spinsters in the other portions of the Queen's dominions have not the art of Catty Kane in managing her grimalkin ; many a sweet thing that is now in danger of turning sour, might be thus saved from passing into the acetous fermentation.

Being on the subject of raising the *wind*, I make use of the information of my friend, to acquaint the



reader with the following important circumstance ; namely, the erection and uses of *Caslaan Pleminhin* : these are small castles, somewhat like those children build of cards, raised up of nine stones in a conical form, and with a door towards the ART from which the wind is required to blow. Some magical rites attend the building of these castles, whose efficacy the most incredulous of the country fellows do not attempt to deny ; but they have an objection to try the operation of the act, as they consider the meddling in such practices might place their souls in the power of some demon ; but they are said to have been extensively used in the former "wrecking times," when ships were considered fair booty, and the hanging out false lights was not considered unwarrantable. Indeed, how could the poor have a scruple on the subject, when the practice was countenanced and taken advantage of by persons who ought to know better. When a ship was seen off the coast, the "Caslaan Pleminhin" were erected to effect the wreck ; the calm which generally succeeds a storm was looked to as part of the required effect, affording the opportunity of approaching and plundering the unfortunate vessel and her crew.

Having disposed of foxes and cats, I proceed now to asses, and there are some rare things expected of them. Passing a child three times under a she ass, while, at the same time, a single drop of her milk is sprinkled on the child in the name of the Trinity, is a sovereign remedy for the whooping cough. If a lady should prove to be unfruitful, which, in truth, is seldom the case in Erris, an ass is the means of

placing her in the wished-for way ; her friends have only to get her a fall—it must be an unwilling one—off the beast's back, and the thing is effected. This dangerous expedient has often been successfully resorted to. But this is not all : a tooth-ache of rather a peculiar kind, to be sure, and quite an Irish one, is cured by kissing an ass ; that is, in case the person having the tooth-ache has no teeth in their head. Take an example drawn from the records of the magisterial court of Erris, as reported to me by a young friend, whose narrative, as I heard it from his lips, I shall endeavour with all possible faithfulness to set down.

Terence O'Dowd summoned Biddy Lavelle before the petty sessions for the loss of his ass, which had been taken by night out of his field where it was safely spancellor, and was found the following morning dead at Biddy's door. Now we will suppose two or more grave justices of the peace sitting as magisterially as any thing without a big wig can, behind a green cloth table, and beside said table is Mister Phill, the clerk, near sighted, and with button nose, as if rubbing the papers before him, and his pen stuck behind his outshelving ear, and before the justices, and just beside the clerk stands Terence, looking reverently at the little thin Testament that has a red tape tied longitudinally and transversely on it, forming a cross for the lieges to kiss.

Now, Terence was a little bandy-legged, broad-shouldered fellow, with a weather-worn face—his brow and chin equally protruded, and his waggish nose forming the middle term between the two—very like a rug-

ged island rising within the shelter of two headlands, and guarding the entrance of a deep inner bay (his mouth), of which said nose was the protecting mole—dressed not exactly like a countryman: he, as if coming from the foreign parts of Ballina and Killala, had his costume out of the common sort; he held a seal skin cap in his hand; he had a large blue jacket, like a tall sailor's cast off, hanging on, rather than fitting him, and tied with a leathern strap about his middle. It was hard to tell what his nether garment was, for the pea jacket came down to his knees, and then a pair of sheep skin spatterdashes met it, formed of untanned hide, with the wool badly pulled off, which made his locomotives rather wild and rugged. Feathered, as it were, to the feet, and also pert and pugnacious like a bantam cock. Such was the accuser.

The culprit was equally remarkable. Old she was, but hale; just in that state of existence when women are, as it were, climacterized out of their sex and appear to get masculine—all feminine rotundity disappears—the flatness of the bust, and the incipient beard, and the wrinkle, instead of the dimple, plainly foreshow that though she may live away almost unlimitedly, yet it is not for any former purpose, she exists now to be the granny and not the mammy of the family; she is still of use in the economical process that is going on in the household. Biddy Lavelle had made this transition: there was a multitude of wrinkles in her face, and yet her grey eye was clear and sparkling; there was no dull halo of senility about its iris. And it was needful it should be so; for, to use the French phrase, she was the “sage

femme" of the district. I need not describe her costume further than that there was a white muslin kerchief tied close round her head, under which was turned, in front, on a sort of a roller, her iron grey hair; that she had the salmon coloured shawl, the brown boddice, and red puckered petticoat, that all old Connaught women wear, and so we have the group before us.

"Well, honest man," says the senior justice, "what have you to say against this woman?"

"Why, plase yer honour, I get my living by a little *daling*, and I do be carrying goods betune this and Ballina, and bring a lot of eggs, and dried fish, and rabbits, and other little things I gother in the Mullet, and sells them, and brings back pedlery, yer honour—combs and looking-glasses, and hard and soft goods, with which I go through the villages; and, yer honour, I had an ass, the quietest, hard-working, kindest baste that ever bore a kreel;—I'd set him, yer honours, against any of his kind from this to Galway for doing more work with less fodder. Oh, Shawneen! now you're gone, and sore my heart is to say it; you were the bully of a crathur."

"Honest man," says one of the magistrates, "you are rather long-winded; consider we have other matters to mind than your long palaver about a dead ass."

"Well, your lordship, I was just going to say that I would not take two golden guineas down in my fist for that same ass. And so it was, that last Sunday come eight days, the woman here drops into me, and she ups and sez, after a mort of coshering and slewdering me—for we are ould acquaintances—

‘ Paddy agra, will you lend me your ass ? ’ ‘ What for, Mrs. Lavelle, should I lend you him ? ’ says I ; ‘ what does the likes of you want with the likes of it ? Is it to take a ride like a lady you want ? ’ ‘ No, in troth, Paddy, it is not ; for I have rides enough in my vocashun, up and down on pillions and sug-gawns through all the boreens in the barony. ’ ‘ Well do you want it to draw up a lock of rack to your pratie-garden ? ’ ‘ No, nor that either. ’ ‘ Oh, thin, what thin, honest woman ? don’t be after tasing me with guessing all this time. ’ ‘ Why, then, if you want to know, and will lend him, I own to you, Paddy, that I want to give him three kisses. ’ ‘ Oh, blur and agurs, ’ cried I, ‘ who ever heard of a woman kissing an ass. ’ ‘ Och then, Paddy, ’ sez she, ‘ it’s because I’m kilt all out with the tooth-ache. ’ ‘ You, Biddy ? is it yerself have the tooth-ache, when to my certy, you have not one tooth in either of your nut-crackers for these seven years. ’ ‘ Och then, Paddy, you nagur, it’s that makes the worst of it ; for sure if I had the teeth, Bill Barrett, the cow doctor, could draw them out ; but now the pain runs here, and there, and everywhere about my jaws, and not one wink of sleep can I get, and I’m sure it will be the death of me, and now I’m tould for sartin, that if I kiss an ass, the pain will lave me for good. ’ ‘ And where, Biddy, I make bould to ask, will the pain go when it laves you ? ’ ‘ Why, then, Phadrig acushla, I’ll tell you the truth ; for why, honest woman as I am, should I keep it from yez ? I believe it’ll go into your baste. ’ ‘ Oh then, if that be so, honest woman, never a kiss shall you bestow on my

Shawneen; likely story indeed, that I'd go for to bother my poor baste in this way—a purty way I'd be in with him at the fair of Crosmolina, next Friday come eight days, with my ass braying all up and down the street, wid the pain borrowed from the likes of you. No, Biddy, were you my own fosther sister, you could not expect this out of me. So go home, and lave me and mine alone, and not be bothering us with your clishmaclavers.' This was the way I refused her, your honours, and out she went, and I thought for good. But, as bad luck would follow me, the woman comes by night, drives my ass out of my little garden, where it was spancelled, beats it before her until she has it at her own door, and there, whatever she done to it, there I finds my ass dead in the morning. And now, yer honours, I hope, as I have made yez sensible, ye will order the woman to pay down two guineas—the very money I could have got for the poor baste; and where, alanna, Shawneen asthore, shall I ever get yer likes again?"

Here Paddy closed his case, and then Mrs. Lavelle was called on to show cause why the price of the ass should not be levied on her. So up gets the "sage femme." "Why thin, gentlemen, sure you would not be after making me pay two guineas for kissing an ass?"

"You acknowledge, then, my good woman," said the senior justice, "that you did kiss the man's animal."

"I did, yer honour; for why would I deny it, and small blame to me for doing the like, when I



knew for sartin that he would take the ruination out of my jaws?"

"And what did you do, honest woman, with the ass, when you drove him away from his owner?"

"Why, what else but drive him to my own *house*, dacently and slowly, just as if it was my own brindled cow, and she going to calve."

"And what did you do when you got the ass to your house?"

"Why, plase yer honour, when there I held him by the halter just over the sil of my door, his head straight above the lucky horse-shoe, nailed at the left side as you come in, and then I lifted up his upper lip, yer honour, and I gave him three kisses on his teeth, and I said the three words the fairy man taught me, and then as by *jomethry*, the pain left me, and then I lets go the ass, thinking as how he knew the way, he would have trotted back to his own home, and nobody would be a bit the wiser."

"Well, honest woman, after you did all this, did the ass bray?"

"Troth not one screech, that I heard; but to tell heaven's truth, I was tired entirely, and so I went to bed, the pain being all gone, and I never woke till morning."

"Well, in the morning, what did you do or see?"

"Why, yer honour, as to doing, I did nothing, and as to seeing, it's too thrue to be sung in a ballad; I saw, when I went out, the ass stiff dead at the gable end of the house—his head down, and his

mouth (God keep us from harm) in a pool of water, just forenint the dung hill."

"And what more, good woman?"

"Why I made a pillaloo, and all the neighbours gothered about the ass—then the owner, Mr. O'Dowd, came, and if he didn't make a ruction, it's no mather."

"Well, Mrs. Lavelle, this is certainly a most extraordinary story: you say you drove the ass quietly to your house, that you did nothing to it there but kiss it on the teeth, that you then let it go, and yet it is found stone dead at your door in the morning. Are you *sure* you did nothing else to it?"

"Sure, yer honour,—and may I never again do a hand's turn, if I thought that a tooth-ache, when it got hould of an ass, would kill it stiff."

Here the clerk interfered, and begged leave of the bench to ask the woman a question or two, which, being allowed, he with no small assumption and sagacity, and tossing his nose in the air, said—

"Now, honest woman, recollect you are before this worshipful bench, and so let us have not only the truth, but the whole truth; you say you did nothing to this man's ass but kiss it, and the kissing cured you. I suppose you did not beat it, or drive it away with stick or stone—but, by the virtue of your oath, did you not give it something?"

"Yer honour, am I to answer that questhen?"

"Yes," said the bench, "to be sure you are."

"Well, thin, since you put it so hard upon me, I did give the crathur a cupfull of spirits, which I had

to wash my own mouth wid, while the pain was bad upon me, and now I thought that since poor Shawneen got the pain, the least I could do was to help him to the remainder of the whiskey. So when I had done kissing, I opened his mouth, and down I tossed the whole cupfull. And now, yer honours, were I at my dying hour, and if I was preparing for anointing, this is all I did to the crathur, and if a drop of a dram was to kill this way, what would become of the world?"

This ended the case for the defence, and both parties being ordered to retire, that due consideration might be given to this abstruse cause—after a time, and not without some hesitation, sentence was pronounced, that Mrs. Bridget Lavelle, inasmuch as she improperly, and without consent given, carried off from Terence O'Dowd's field a certain ass, and did within her own premises, tamper with the animal in an unheard-of manner, and did something which deprived it of life, which something, in all likelihood, was the causing of it to drink a thing so unnatural as whiskey, which seems to have so stopped its breath, that it could not bray; therefore the court adjudged that the woman should pay this man the sum of thirty shillings.

This trial made no little noise at the time, and while some would have it that Biddy was made to pay for making an ass dead drunk, others asserted that she paid for her kissing; but on all hands it was allowed, that never was there an odder cause, or a queerer trial, and surely it should be inserted amongst Irish "causes celebres," if ever such a work

should be published—for of its authenticity there can be no doubt.

I should conclude what I have to say respecting the relations of the Errisians with the inferior animals, by narrating a fact or two respecting the seal. In a former chapter, I mentioned how the people in the vicinity of Downpatrick Head, have given up seal catching, under the conviction that these creatures are instinct with the souls of their forefathers, who, in that state, undergo their purgatory. Some superstition, but not exactly of the same kind, prevails in Erris; here they are considered as human beings under enchantment, and as every superstition is cruel in proportion to its darkness, they consider it unlucky to have any thing to do with seals, and to have a live one near their dwellings is considered as productive of evil to life and property. Mr. Maxwell, in his well-written "Wild Sports of the West," relates a most affecting, and at the same time, revolting anecdote of a seal that showed, when domesticated, (for this creature can be easily tamed,) great attachment to its owner, which fondness, under the influence of the superstition I allude to, was requited with monstrous barbarity. I cannot (thank goodness) adduce any thing similar, but I can show that the *feeling* still exists from the following fact:—A young seal, during a summer's night, came ashore, having in some unexplained way lost its dam, and creeping inland, it by chance observed a man asleep behind a rock, where he had placed himself in order to keep watch over a flock of sheep, and hinder them from trespassing on some

adjoining corn. The young seal, taking the man wrapped up in his frieze big coat for his mother, nestled up close to him, and kept bobbing at his breast, seeking, as it would seem, its wonted maternal nourishment. This awoke Paddy, and his astonishment may be guessed at when he found the marine creature thus making application to his bosom ; the man brought it home as a curiosity, and the neighbours informing him that Mr. G. C. was on the look out for a seal to send to Dublin, he brought it at once to that gentleman, who, of course, rewarded him for his PRESENT ; but now the question was, what to do with the creature until it could be forwarded to the metropolis. Mr. C., a young unmarried man, had no house of his own, and he therefore requested a gentleman in the neighbourhood of Belmullet to keep it in his yard for him for a short time ; this was of course agreed to ; but when the fact came under the cognizance of the people in the kitchen, there was a grievous outcry, and the mistress of the house being assured, with much anxiety, that there could be neither luck nor grace about the house while the *sale* was there, she had her own misgivings, and so to be on the sure side, she ordered the animal to be taken down to one of the master's tenants, with strict injunctions for *him* to keep it, and take the best care of it. Well, as soon as it was laid down in the farmer's kitchen, there was no small controversy, and loud was the complaint of all the woman-kind about the place. A purty thing it was, indeed, for the mistress to be sending the unlucky baste away from her *own* place, and to go

for to fasten the bad luck upon their poor tenants. So says the farmer's wife ; " troth then I won't put up with it, for why should I, no, not even from my own landlord. So, Paddy avick, (speaking to a little gossoon that was in the kitchen,) go down this instant minute to Bryan Donnell, our cottier, and tell him from me, and as he values his pratie garden, to keep the baste safe till I send to him for it." So the seal was passed to Bryan, and here was as great a commotion as there was but lately in the gentleman or the farmer's kitchen, the same feeling of impending misfortune ; but Tim, who knew that his cabin and potato-garden depended on submission, appeared to accept the trust, and desired the bringer of it to go home, and say he would take care of the *baste* ; but that very night he brought it down in his arms to the sea shore, and there left it, hoping, as indeed was the case, he would hear no more of it, and intending to asseverate, which he did with great emphasis next day, that the crathur got away some how or other in the night unknownst to him.

That they are human beings enchanted, the following story, which is commonly told and believed, proves beyond a doubt :—Owen Gallagher, who was well-known as an expert bird hunter, a good shot with a long gun at a swan or a seal, and a practised fisherman, was one long summer's day far out at sea in his corragh, fishing,—when a fog came down on him, and in a short time he got uncertain of his right direction, and at a loss whether he was making for the land or getting farther and farther from shore.



In this state of perplexity he by-and-by sees an island looming straight before him, and supposing it was Inniskea, he made towards it, and soon touched a smooth sheltered beach, up which he dragged his corragh ; and then looking about him, was surprised at not seeing any thing like Inniskea, with which he was so well acquainted, but a great green plain stretching far away westward, on which he could observe, as well as the fog would permit, but a single cabin, that looked to be as lonesome as house could be. So, having no choice, he made towards it, hoping that he would therein find, what is never refused, a hearty welcome ; but when he entered, he saw it was but a poor place, and not a living soul within, but an old man, who sat with his head bent between his knees, and moaning piteously.

“ Bright morning to you, sir,” says Tim.

“ Och, is that you ?” says the old man ; “ it’s an ill wind that brought you here, Mr. Gallagher, let me tell ye.”

“ Ah then for what, sir,” says Tim, mighty civil, “ wouldn’t I be welcome ? for sure if *you* came across my threshold in the parish of Kilmore, it’s I that would give ye the best of threatment.”

“ Why, then, Mr. Gallagher, I’ll tell ye for why : because you’re the greatest inimy ever came across me ; for it’s your own self that makes me the poor crathur you see me, depending on others for my bit ; for it was your own self that put out one eye, and made the other so sore that not a fish I can catch—not a salmon, not a rock-cod ; and only I now and

then grope for a crab, and wasn't it that I have those who take care of me, I'd be lost entirely."

"Why, then, who are ye at all, at all?" cries Gallagher; "for may I never do a good hand's turn, if I have any remembrance of ever putting out any man's eye."

"Och, but indeed you did! Don't you remember last St. Martin's day come two years, when with your long gun you came unknownst on the sales that were lying basking on Cleggan Point in Blacksod Bay, and you fired and 'twas me you hit, and put my eye out, bad luck to you! and it's well I and others got away to sea from you, and the likes of you, that won't be letting us alone, poor suffering crathurs."

"Why, what are you at all, at all? sure you are no sale, but a Christhan man?"

"Och, but I am a *sale* and a man too—a man, to be sure, under enchantment. But so it is, that one enchantment stops, for a time, another; and this is an enchanted part of the sea, and this is an enchanted island; and therefore it is, that, when we *sales* do wish to get back to our ould shapes as men, we are allowed to swim here, and as long as we get lave to stay, we are morthal men; but when we quit this, we turn to SALES again. But make haste, Tim Gallagher, if you be yer own frind, for I expect every moment my boys to return; and, let me tell ye, that if they catch the man who blinded their father, and made them ever afther take the trouble of getting him food, maybe it will be worse for ye—so make yourself scarce in no time."

This advice, it may be supposed, Tim Gallagher took, and so pushing his corragh afloat, he made off from the enchanted island; and the fog clearing away, and the magic land vanishing, he in due time got home to tell his adventure, and to warn the world that there was something not *nathral* in *sales*.

All these anecdotes exhibit the people as a pleasant, good-humoured, and good-natured people, of great simplicity of character connected with shrewdness; their conception concerning the eternal world and spiritual things is very obscure, and very carnal, and absurd; but, at the same time, perhaps not much more so than that of ignorant uneducated people in other places where better things should be expected.

I think I could adduce instances of very gross views and practices in Wales, Cornwall, and the strictly agricultural districts of England, that might very well match with the absurdities I have narrated respecting Achill and Erris.\* But this is no reason

\* The instances of gross, degrading, and sometimes cruel superstitions with which my friend has supplied me -- and I could from his, and other information, supply much more—are, to be sure, much to be lamented, and I give them publicity in the hope that exposure may induce those who have influence to put an end to them—at all events a *proper* education must and will do it. In England such practices *were* very common, and in much credit a century ago; as Mr. John Aubrey and others abundantly show. Take the two following recipes, selected from amongst many others in Aubrey's Miscellanies, because they are short, and not indecent, as most of them are.

To cure the thrush—Take a living frog, and, holding it in a cloth, put the head into the child's mouth until the frog is dead, and then take another and do the same.

To cure a bullock that hath the wisp, that is, lame between

why, whenever they are heard of, they should not be narrated and exposed—bringing the public eye to bear upon such dark things is a most effectual step to have them removed, and if the schoolmaster be abroad, which they say he is, send him to such places, and with the light he must carry with him, to dissipate such darkness, and make reason seize on the territory that prejudice had long marked for her own. It is with this view I write what I do; not, surely, to make an amiable people ridiculous; but, if possible, to induce those who *can* improve them to show a more excellent way.

Like all ignorant and at the same time imaginative people, the natives of Erris have very carnal views on what is usually considered the invisible world. Take for instance the following:—When the cholera prevailed eight years ago, the conception amongst the Errisians was that of an old witch who went along with a terrible countenance, horrid hair, and breathing out a dense

the clees—Take the impression of the beast's foot in the earth, then dig it up, and stick therein five or seven thorns on the wrong side, and then hang it on a bush to dry, and as that dries so the bullock heals. But for an English practice take the following, extracted from a Yorkshire newspaper of a recent date:—

“A wealthy farmer, living not one hundred miles from Nunnington, in the North-Riding of this county, having lost a number of cattle by disease within the last twelve months, and entertaining the idea that they were bewitched by a poor old woman, sent for a ‘wise man,’ who, after burning the heart of an ox with a pin, read a form of prayer in every field and out-house belonging to the farmer. After remaining for a week living upon good cheer, and getting his pocket well filled with cash, the ‘wise man’ then took his departure, leaving the poor dupe of a farmer satisfied that he shall lose no more cattle.”

fume, dropping pestilence wherever she went ; that in her vocation as she moved along from Sligo and passed the Moy at Ballina, where she made thousands blue and stiff with her death-dealing breath, she strode westwards through Tyrawly and came to the river Owenmore, and was in the act of wading that stream, when a pious man, who had been on his knees just going through a decade of prayers with his beads, and, rising therefrom, saw her in the middle of the stream ; and moved to it, no doubt by his guardian angel, he up with a stone and flung it at her with all his force, and that with the best effect ; for he broke her thigh ; and with that she turned about, and why shouldn't she, and never made her appearance in Erris. It would have been well for Ireland if, instead of her costly apparatus of doctors and hospitals, such a worthy voteen as this could have been found to arrest Mrs. Cholera before she landed on our shores.

I may adduce another instance of the carnalising of unseen things, and shall use a friend's words—"During my residence in these mountains, I have been much puzzled at seeing the *cut hair* of every family carefully deposited in the side walls of their houses, and, suspecting it was done through some superstitious motive, I have frequently endeavoured to come at the reason, but my queries have been invariably evaded. This day I have been more successful. On asking a man the question, he told me in a very straightforward kind of way, 'that the dead would have to produce all the hair they ever had in this world.' The inference I draw from this is,

that the people collect it now to save them trouble hereafter."

I give another on the same authority, and then shall have done on this head.—"When Archbishop M'Hale made his first visit to Erris, an old man, named G——n, a neighbour of a neighbour of mine, went with many hundreds to be confirmed at Inver. The prelate, surprised no doubt to see so old a man come before him, asked him how many Gods there were. 'Three,' bluntly replied the old catechumen. 'Three!' exclaimed the bishop in horror at such a heresy; 'why, you ignorant old man, there is but one.' 'There may be only one *now*, times are changing so,' sturdily replied old G——n; 'but when I was a boy there certainly were three—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.' The archbishop said no more to G——n, but, turning to one of the priests, said in a half whisper—'I hope that poor old man is happy in his belief.' This story I had from a priest that was present." I mention this circumstance as I received it, and I do so for the reasons I have already adduced—qualifying it in this way that the old man, talking in the English language might, from his ignorance of the Sassenach tongue, have said what he did not mean; and at any rate, if he did say so and thought so, he was no worse a theologian than many an old boor in other parts of the world.

The natives of Erris are not at all cleanly in their persons or houses: in many of their houses, as I have been given to understand, they have but one vessel that will hold water, and that is the metal



potato pot ; and therefore personal ablution is confined to the face and neck. A person remarking on this disagreeable subject, observed that he could see plainly the line of demarcation between the washed and unwashed parts ; which line put him in mind, so defined was it, of the tide-water mark on the sea shore. Indeed this I remarked myself, that twice while I have been in Erris, I never observed any one bathing along its shores, so admirably convenient as they are for the purpose. The first time I was there, no doubt the weather was not encouraging for sea bathing, but the last time nothing could be so tempting ; yet not a human being did I see, except two of the coast guard. When on other parts of the Irish shore, as, for instance, along the shores of the county of Clare, multitudes of the country people might be observed at all hours of the day bathing—but here not one. In the same way, I believe the people are neither fond of fishing or eating fish ; and I suppose that at any time they would prefer potatoes and milk to the best fish that could be laid before them. At any rate I observed that there were in the different bays and inlets comparatively very few boats or corraghs ; neither did I see in very calm weather many out at sea. I was told that fish had ceased to be plenty on these shores. I ventured, in my former volume, to assign a cause for this unhappy scarcity, when speaking of Blacksod Bay. I remember hearing a person say, who knew these shores well, (he commanding a king's cutter off the station,) that in times of scarcity when the Rush fishermen, who had come round from Fingal to fish on this coast,

landed a cargo of cod or ling on these shores for the purpose of salting them, the people who were too lazy, or what perhaps is the more reasonable cause, were too poor and ill provided with tackle to go out to fish, were glad, there being a scarcity of potatoes, to pick up the heads and other offal which the Rush fishermen threw away.

Having detailed thus far the information I have received respecting the actual state of this district, it might be expected of me that I should offer some suggestions regarding its improvement. Acknowledging myself not altogether adequate to such an undertaking, either from previous knowledge, or the accuracy of the information I have been enabled to procure, I would still offer a few hints which may be taken *ad valorem*.

The first step which I assume ought to be taken, would be to destroy the existing tenures of the people; the whole rundale system, which I have attempted to describe, should be abolished, and every householder made the tenant of an undivided allotment, over which no other person should have power except the landlord. It would also be expedient for every tenant to erect and inhabit a house on his own farm, and break up the village system altogether. It would be also necessary for the landlord to direct and control the cultivation of the ground allotted to tillage on the respective holdings, and to insist on another rate of manuring and rotation of crops. Indeed I have long considered, that on account of the lamentable want of capital that exists in the country, the landlords should become, as it were, partners in the husbandry of the

estates on the *metairie* system that prevails so much in France and Italy, and that they should supply the seed, implements, and stock, while the tenant supplies the labour, and that a definitive portion of the *produce* (not *money*) should come to the landlord's share ; or, if the supply of all but labour on the part of the landlord could not, from his want of capital, be allowed, that at any rate he should receive off the respective farms not a money, but a produce rent ; as, for instance, such a proportion of the corn and cattle : so much oats, so much barley, so much butter, wool, pigs ; in a word, a share of whatever the land is best capable of producing. In this way I understand Lord George Hill in an extensive property he has purchased, and now gives up his fine mind to manage in the county of Donegal, provides seed corn, supplies a stock of pigs, cows, or sheep, of breeds best adapted to the country or climate. He has erected large storehouses, where he receives the grain of his tenantry, either in certain proportions or at a fixed price ; and becoming the merchant as well as the landlord of his estate, he either exports or holds over for the supply of the vicinity at a future day, just as much as he deems expedient. Of course, in doing all this, he must exercise considerable inspective vigilance on the part of himself or his bailiffs and agents ; but he is doing incalculable good : he has already won great confidence in his disinterestedness and integrity, and the experiment, as far as it has gone, has been most satisfactory. Now I conceive, that if the Erris landowners would even go so far as to take produce in payment, and not money, the distressing events I

have heard of would not occur : of the tenantry, in many instances, being obliged to mortgage their corn, and butter, and pigs, before they are ready for market, in order to meet the money rents they owe to the landlord ; and the consequence is, that the dealers in the little export town are thriving rapidly, and making in a sudden manner thousands of pounds, while the poor growers are not bettering, but every year getting worse ; and at the same time the landlord is not satisfied, but still complains of his tenant's want of punctuality. I am quite sure that under the present system—village and rundale cultivation—under the little (if any) stimulus existing for improvement, the landlords are doing their best for their tenantry ; and still they fear, and justly, the resorting to harsh measures to make people adopt what must eventually end in mutual good. I am sure the Erris landlords, speaking of them generally, have done and are doing much ; as much, perhaps, as their family circumstances will allow them to do, yet I should hope, that by the aid of parliamentary enactments, they might acquire powers that would justify them in redeeming their very capable properties from their unproductive state of waste and desolation.

I have already said, that the great evil of the far-west of Ireland is the largeness of the territories of its proprietors.\* Priding themselves, as they do, in

\* The great fee properties in Erris, are in the following proportion :—Shaen Estate, (now divided between Major Bingham and Mr. Carter,) 95,000. Sir Richard O'Donnell, 30,000. Major Cormick, 10,000. See of Killala, 6,500 acres.

their wide possessions, they, as I understand, feel a great jealousy of letting any of the wastes get out of their own hands : like the American land-jobbers, they still hold over, expecting great payments in future. In a free country like this, to be sure, every one has a right to do what he likes with his own ; still it is lamentable to see a people, in some of the dry, barren, worn-out, limestonedistricts of Mayo and Roscommon, crowding so densely and so fearfully, when within thirty or forty miles there are tracts in Connemara, Joyce Country, Tyrawly, and Erris, that, under the exercise of well-directed and assisted labour, might be made capable of supporting multitudes, and yet give a remunerating rent to the landlord. I have said in my former volume, when writing of Achill and the districts adjoining it, that of all the waste lands of Ireland, the shallow bog land, that, at an elevation of two hundred feet and under from the level of the sea, presents a varied surface of swells and hollows, with ample and rapid drainage to the adjoining lakes and rivers, is the most improvable waste land in Ireland ; while the mountain districts, from their height, and the flat low bogs, from their depth and difficulty of drainage, present comparatively unconquerable difficulties. And here I would remark the (to me) evident mistake and misapplication of the funds of societies who have hitherto undertaken the improvement of waste lands ; they have chosen either mountains or flat flow bogs, and have sunk money to a large extent indeed in impracticable adventures. I know a man who has, at the expense of about £60 per acre, reclaimed, as he says, a red

flow bog in Leinster, and he grows good wheat thereon. So he may—money will do any thing ; but how long will he grow it ? and what will be his bog improvement by-and-by ? he might have purchased the fee-simple of good upland, fit for tillage or pasture, at half the price per acre that he has expended on his flow bog, full forty feet deep. I also knew of a society that attempted the improvement of land for the location of an interesting class of people, whom they desired to protect and make comfortable. Under the temptation of getting a tract at half a crown an acre, they took a mountain side in the north-west of Ireland, where the elevation was more than a thousand feet above the sea. What was the consequence ? They built, they drained, manured and sowed ; but they could not keep the rain and mist from the hill-sides ; and the potatoes were so wet as not to be eatable, and the corn in November was so green as not to be worth reaping, and no turf could be dried, and no hay saved. So the poor colonists, when they found that they were thus to be made children of the mist, stole away from their allotments. The society broke to pieces ; and the landlord has now the satisfaction, when he visits this desolate mountain-side, of seeing the ruins of tenements that tell of as absurd a speculation as ever a town committee originated, who were perfectly ignorant of the climate and soil of the country they would improve.

The truth is, there is a great deal of nonsense written about the waste lands of Ireland—the millions of acres of waste lands. But here there is much of misrepresentation. There are, to be sure, millions of



acres of land, wild and dreary, but they are not waste—if by waste is meant altogether unproductive. Of the mountains of Ireland, especially those of the north and west, where there is not bare rock the general surface is bog; unlike the Welsh or Scottish Highland mountains, that from their dry and consequently grassy sides are fitted for the pasture of sheep, the Irish Highlands of Connaught and Ulster are too wet for sheep, and are only fit for the run of young black cattle in the summer season. These districts I consider as inapplicable to any other purpose than that to which they are now applied; and they cannot be considered as waste when they rear a quantity of stock which are subsequently fattened on the lower lands. Of the great central flow bogs, which have the general appellation of the Bog of Allen, I consider the reclamation, for the present, to any great extent, as hopeless. Perhaps, under the mechanical and chemical improvements of the coming times, they may be made to supply the waste of the coal-fields of the empire, but for any agricultural purpose their entire reclamation is hopeless. But not so the shallow bog surfaces of Connemara, Erris, &c. &c., where their level is low, and where, protected by sheltering mountains from the terrible north-west winds of the Atlantic, I hold that they are highly improvable; that with lime, which is generally to be had convenient—gravel, which is under the surface—and manure, which may be got from the adjoining sea, or from the manure made by housing cattle in the winter, abundant crops of corn, grass, and potatoes may be raised; rape for winter food, or for the

making of oil, can, by the simple process of burning the surface and draining, be raised to any extent; and eventually, these tracts, laid down to grass, and the drainage attended to, might become permanently productive either as meadow or pasture. I should suppose that, if a landlord commenced as a pattern to others the improvement of from twenty to fifty acres; if, upon a settled plan, and at an expenditure of labour within the reach of a poor family, he could show that a farm of ten or twenty acres could be won from the waste; if he gave allotments of from five to twenty acres, RENT FREE, for a certain number of years—say ten—to persons willing to bestow their labour on them; if he then fixed a moderate rent for the life of the undertaker; and made leases containing covenants liberal, and at the same time prudentially restrictive; if the landlord took upon himself the keeping up of the drains on the respective holdings, and the supply of lime on moderate terms; if all possible encouragement was held out by rewards and honours to the most industrious, I am quite sure that much of the wastes of Erris and Connemara might be brought into productiveness, and made capable of supporting a large and not at the same time superabundant population,—which only can take place when a property is neglected, and when the owner is a short-sighted fool, or a person whose pecuniary difficulties and law embarrassments have deprived him of a control over what is *called* his property.

If, then, these western wastes are, as I allow them to be, the opprobrium of Ireland, and a ground of accusation against their proprietors, yet this charge,

before it is sternly and decidedly laid on the *nominal* owners, ought to be inquired into; and, besides taking into account their pecuniary difficulties, which in most cases they have inherited from their forefathers, and their want of capital, it ought to be considered that it is not so easy to improve the face of a country, previous to improving the character of the people; and if the angry question be put to the Connaught proprietors—"Why don't you improve *your wastes*?" *they* may retort, "Why are not manufactures introduced into the island at large? Why don't factories for the production of woollen, cotton, and silk fabrics rise up along *all* our rivers? Why are our mines not worked with spirit? Why no export, except of the raw produce of the earth?" The Connaught bog lord finds the same excuse for not improving, as the cotton lord for not setting his power looms a-going, and that is, the people have not yet got the industrial character, and you must improve the people before you weave cotton or reclaim a bog. The first step, I take it, then, should be the educational elevation of the people; and I am quite sure the neglect of taking this step into calculation has been the cause of all the failures in the way of improving their respective properties which the Connaught gentry have to lament. Major Bingham, of Erris, for instance, has been a great speculator; his long life has been all devoted to projecting and instituting what he felt would be both profitable to himself and beneficial to his tenantry; and I am quite sure, that had he people about him who would have worked out his plans, many a scheme of his, which terminated

in disappointment, would have produced the beneficial results he fondly anticipated—but he began too soon. He was a premature projector, and failed because he would be a manufacturer without handicraftsmen or tools ; and his failures are pointed out as FOLLIES. The Major, in his struggles at improvement, suggests to me the idea of a person of unusual stature journeying, with others of common height, across a dreary flat, over which has settled a stratum of fog, whose thickness is such, that while he, by the head and shoulders, is above the mist, the other wayfarers therein are moving, or rather groping, darkly ; and *he* sees the distant hills all green with productive verdure, and he calls on his companions to admire the beautiful prospect, and to hasten towards the better land ; but this they will not do, for they cannot appreciate what they cannot observe. Wrapped in the enveloping fog, the tall man must lift them up before they can see, and resolve to follow ; or he must dissipate the general obscurity before he can have a community who will attend him with alacrity and ease. I say, therefore, that before the bogs of the west are turned into green fields, the people must be industriously educated. I repeat that the Connaught landowners are only to blame in not taking the *right method*, and that I believe was scarcely, if at all, within their power. They did much according to their lights and their time ; they introduced colonists from the north ; they worked hard to introduce the linen manufacture ; they often and often brought Scotch and English stewards to practise and exhibit new systems of husbandry, but all in vain ; they

were working as vainly as Sisyphus rolling a rock up a hill ; the people have hitherto proved impracticable, and it is found, and ought to be known of all, that you cannot *force* a people into prosperity. The introduction, therefore, of a few strangers into a country in order to show the natives "a more excellent way," has universally failed. The Ulster men, that more than once have been brought into Connaught, are not now distinguishable from the natives. The Palatines, introduced a century ago into Munster, instead of raising up the industrial character of the people to *their* level, have in a great measure sunk down to the common abasement. The only parts of Ireland that have been effectually improved by the introduction of strangers are, the eastern parts of Ulster, and the baronies of Bargie and Forth, in the county of Wexford. In these districts, instead of attempting to improve the aborigines, they were driven out or exterminated, they passed away before the face of Scotchmen or Welshmen, as the Firbolg and Tuatha Danaan before the Milesian invaders. I am anxious in this way to account for not only the utter neglect of capabilities, but also for failures, and for giving over despairingly after works have been carefully and anxiously begun. Lord Lucan began, some time ago, an extensive bog improvement on his estate in Mayo. I hear he has given it up. Mr. Knight gives an account in his work of an *improvement* on the estate of Mr. Everard in the Mullet of Erris. Having made inquiries concerning this adventure I find that it does not *now* exist. I shall say no more on this subject, for the best

of reasons, because I had not sufficient opportunities of observation. I am induced to believe that Mr. Carter, the proprietor of Belmullet, and of half the Shaen estate, is directing his mind to the improvement of his large property—that he is prudent enough not to attempt too much at once—that, under the advice of his excellent agent, he is affording every facility in the way of encouraging prudent speculators, and the investment of capital; consequently, in time, this district *may* become, in its people more civilized, and in its husbandry more satisfactory and productive. I would refer my readers to the more elaborate and business-like work of Mr. Knight for information concerning the wants, the capabilities, and the means of improving Erris.

THE END.

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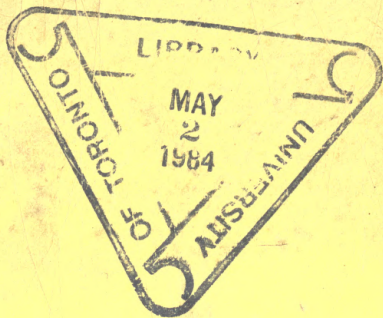
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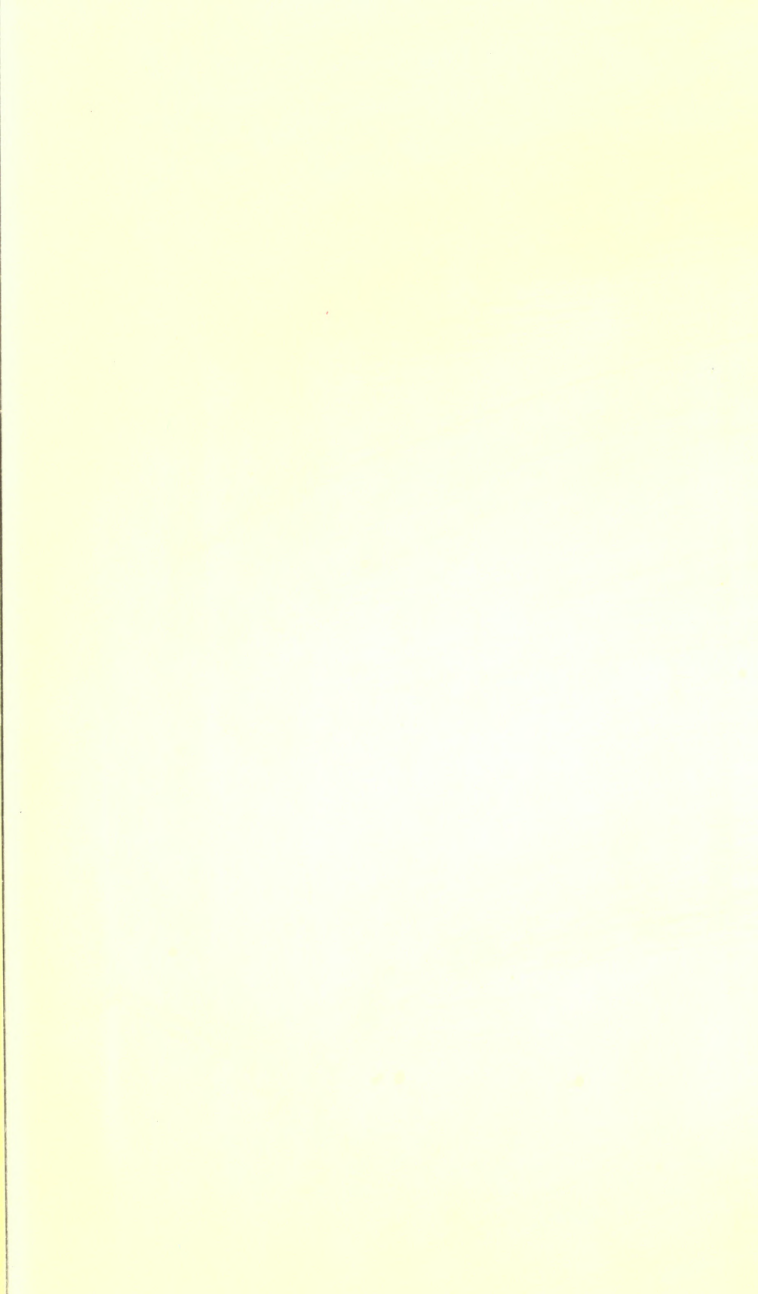
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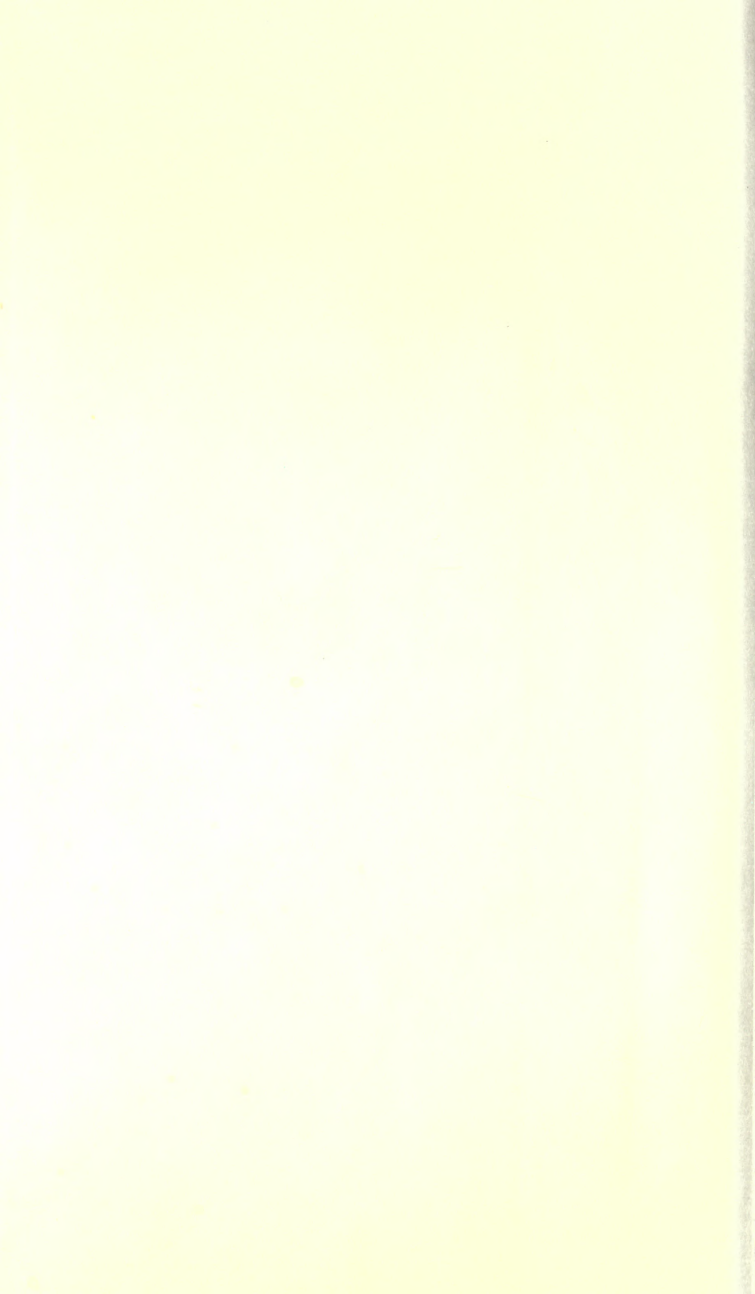




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